

THE
MISCELLANEOUS
WORKS
OF
Mr. J. J. ROUSSEAU.

VOLUME III.



LONDON:

Printed for T. BECKET and P. A. DE HONDT,
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MISCELLANEOUS

W. O. R. K. S.

OF



MS. B. 1. 1.

VOLUME III.



LONDON:

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V O L. III. contains

An Epistle from J. J. ROUSSEAU, Citizen of Geneva, to Mr. D'ALEMBERT, Member of the French Academy, &c. concerning the Article GENEVA, in the seventh Volume of the Encyclopedie; and particularly on the Project of establishing a Play-house in that City.

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EMILE.

AN
E P I S T L E

FROM

J. J. ROUSSEAU,
CITIZEN of GENEVA,

TO

Mr. D'ALEMBERT,

Member of the French Academy, &c.

Concerning the Article *Geneva*, in the seventh
Volume of the Encyclopedie; and particularly
on the Project of establishing a Play-
house in that City.

Dii meliora piis, erroremque hostibus illum.

E P I S T L E

FROM

ALISTO CASSANO

CITIZEN OF GENOVA

TO

BERNARD

Member of the French Academy, &c.

Concerning the Article signed, in the Journal

Vol. 1. of the Philosophical and Political

Journal, of the 15th of January, 1789.

Paris, 1789.

Printed by C. G. B.

De la Haye, chez M. le Libraire.

Vol. II. Misc.

P R E F A C E.

I Should be to blame if I took up my pen on the present occasion without necessity. It can be neither advantageous nor agreeable for me, to enter the lists with Mr. d'Alembert; whose person I respect, whose talents I admire, and whose writings I hold in esteem. I am sensible of the handsome things he hath said of my native country, and have even been particularly honoured by his encomiums; so that in every respect I am under obligations to him. Such obligations, however, will never be thought sufficient to supersede our moral duties, unless with those whose morality consists in mere appearances. Justice and truth are the first of these duties; humanity and patriotism the first of our affections. When personal considerations induce men to invert this order, they are criminal. Shall I be thought culpable therefore in discharging my duty? Let him answer me, who hath the service of his country at heart, and hath a greater regard for his own duty, than the fear of displeasing others.

As the *Encyclopedie* is not in every body's hands, I shall here transcribe the passage, from the article *Geneva* in that dictionary, which hath engaged me to write this epistle. It should rather indeed have prevented me, if I aspired to the honour of writing well; but I am bold

enough to be ambitious of another kind of honour, in which I am under no apprehensions of a rival.

On reading the passage in question by itself, the reader will be surprized at the author's zeal and motives ; but on perusing the whole article from which it is selected, he will see that the subject of a theatre, of which there is none at present at Geneva, though there may possibly be one hereafter, takes up an eighth part of what the writer hath advanced in the whole.

“ Play-houses are not tolerated at Geneva ; not because the citizens disapprove theatrical entertainments in themselves ; but it is said they are afraid of that taste for dress, dissipation and irreligion which a company of comedians are apt to diffuse among young people. Is there no possibility, however, to remedy this inconvenience, by severe and well-executed laws, regarding the conduct of the comedians ? By such means, Geneva might have theatrical entertainments with good morals, and enjoy the advantage of both. Dramatic representations would have a good effect, in forming the taste of the spectators, and in giving them a sensibility and delicacy of sentiment, which are hardly to be acquired by other means : literature would profit by it, without giving any encouragement to licentiousness, and Geneva might possess at once the wisdom of Sparta, and the urbanity of Athens. Another consideration, worthy so wise a republic, ought perhaps to induce them to admit of play-houses. The barbarous prepossession which generally prevails against the profession of a comedian, that kind of contempt in which we hold persons so necessary

to the progress and support of the arts, is undoubtedly one of the chief causes of that irregularity with which we reproach them; while they endeavour to indemnify themselves by means of pleasure, for the want of that esteem which their situation cannot obtain. In these times, a comedian of good morals merits double respect; and yet he is hardly looked upon. The extortioner who oppresses the poor, and enriches himself by the necessities of the publick; the fawning courtier who never pays his debts: such are the men who are much more respected. Were comedians to be not only tolerated at Geneva, but at first subjected to proper regulations; then encouraged according to their behaviour, and in time admitted to the rank and privilege of citizens, that city would soon have the advantage of a respectable company of comedians, which is usually thought very rare; though it is certainly we that make it so. Add to this, they would soon become the best in Europe; as many persons who have a taste and inclination for the theatre, and are afraid of disgracing themselves or families by appearing on our stage, would resort to Geneva, to cultivate their agreeable and uncommon talents with esteem. That city also, which now is considered by most French people as very dull and solitary for want of public entertainments, would then become agreeable, as the seat of innocent pleasures; as it is now respectable for that of liberty and philosophy. Foreigners would no longer have reason to be surprized, that regular and decent entertainments should be prohibited in a city, which tolerates gross and stupid drolls, as contrary to good taste as to good manners. Nor is this all:

the example of the players of Geneva, the regularity of their conduct, and the respect paid them by their fellow-citizens, will probably by degrees be followed by comedians of other nations; at the same time, that it will serve as a reproof to those who have hitherto treated them with absurd severity. We should see them no longer anathematized by the church, while they were pensioned by the state: our priests would lose the habit of excommunicating them, and our citizens of looking upon them with contempt: thus would a petty Republick have the honour of bringing about a reformation in Europe, on a point of greater importance perhaps than is generally imagined."

This is, undoubtedly, one of the most agreeable and seductive pictures that can be exhibited to our view; at the same time, it contains the most pernicious advice that can be given us. At least such is my opinion; for which I have given my reasons in the following sheets.

With what avidity will not the youth of Geneva lay hold of the authority of so great a writer, to indulge themselves in notions to which they have already here too much propensity? How many of our young people are there, who, otherwise good citizens, wait with impatience for a favourable opportunity of establishing a theatre; thinking, by that means, to do a signal service to their country and to mankind? This is the subject of my fears, and this the evil I would prevent. At the same time, I must do justice to the intentions of Mr. d'Alembert, and hope he will do the same to mine; for I have no more design to give offence to him, than he may have to do an injury to us. But even if after all I should be mistaken, ought

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P R E F A C E.

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I not to act and speak according to the dictates of my conscience, and to the best of my judgment? Ought I to have been silent? Or could I have been so, without neglecting my duty, and betraying the interests of my country?

To be able to justify my silence on this occasion, I ought not to have written on less interesting subjects. That agreeable obscurity which I happily enjoyed for above thirty years, ought to have been always my delight; it should not have been publicly known that I had any connection with the editors of the *Encyclopedie*; that I furnished some articles for that work, and that my name is contained in the list of its authors. My zeal for my native country ought to be less known, in order to warrant a supposition that the article *Geneva* could escape me, or that my silence would not give reason to think I approved of what it contains. Nothing of all this being true, it was therefore necessary for me to speak. I am obliged to disown what I do not approve, lest opinions should be imputed to me which I do not maintain. I am well apprized that my countrymen by no means want my advice; but I have a mind to do myself honour, in shewing that I am of their own principles.

I am not to learn that this essay is not only far short of what it ought to be; but that it is even far short of what in my happier days I had it in my power to make it. But so many concurrent circumstances have contributed to render it so much below the mediocrity I once could have attained to, that I am astonished it is not much worse than it is. In writing in the defence of my country, if zeal could have

supplied the want of abilities, I should have even surpassed what I ever did before; but I saw how much was necessary to be done, and could not put it into execution.

I have indeed told the plain truth, but who troubles himself about that? A very poor way of recommending a book! To be useful, it should be agreeable, and my pen hath lost that art. Some persons may malignantly dispute that loss: but no matter, I perceive myself fallen, and none can fall lower than nothing.

In the first place, the subject of the present dispute is not an idle question in speculative philosophy; but a practical truth of importance to a whole nation. I am not addressing myself to the few, but to the publick; nor is it my present intention to set others thinking, but to communicate clearly and plainly my own thoughts. It hath been necessary for me therefore to change my usual stile; in order to be understood by all kinds of readers, I have used many words to express but few things, and while I have endeavoured to render myself easily intelligible, have been perhaps tedious and diffuse.

I laid my account at first with the publication of a sheet or two at most; but as I began in haste, so the subject increasing under my pen, I permitted it to run on without restraint. I was ill and dejected; and, though I wanted something to amuse and divert me, I found myself so little disposed to think and write, that if the thoughts of discharging my duty had not kept up my spirits, I should have thrown my papers frequently into the fire. Hence I am become less severe and critical on myself. I endeavoured in the course of my labour to
find

find some amusement to support me; I have, therefore, wandered into every digression that presented itself, without foreseeing how much, by consulting my own ease, I should fatigue the reader.

Taste, judgment and correctness are not to be found in this performance. Living in solitude, I had no opportunity to shew it to any body. I had once indeed a severe and judicious Aristarchus; but I have him, I would have him, no longer: * although I shall incessantly regret his loss; by which my heart still suffers even more than my writings.

Solitude calms the soul, and softens those passions which arise from the tumult and disorder of the world. At a distance from the provocations of vice, we speak of it with less indignation: at a distance from the evils which affect us, the heart is less moved against their enormity. Since I have ceased to converse with mankind, I have almost ceased to hate the wicked. Besides, the evil they have done me, deprives me of all right to speak ill of them. Henceforth I must forgive, that I may not resemble them. I should else insensibly substitute the love of revenge to that of justice; it is better totally to forget them. I hope the reader will find no more of that asperity, for which my former writings have been censured;

* Though thou drewest a sword at thy friend, yet despair not: for there may be a returning to favour. If thou hast opened thy mouth against thy friend, fear not: for there may be a reconciliation; except for upbraiding, or pride, or disclosing of secrets, or a treacherous wound: for, for these things every friend will depart. Eccles. Chap. xxii. ver. 21, 22.

though it caused them to be read : I am content to have fewer readers, on conditions of being permitted to live in peace.

To these reasons may be added another, more cruel ; and which it would be in vain for me to dissemble, as the publick would know it but too well in spite of me. If among the several essays that have come from my pen, the following should happen to be inferior to the others, it is less to be imputed to accidental circumstances, than to my own fault : I am sunk below myself. Bodily ills exhaust the soul, which loses its spring by dint of suffering. A transitory instant of fermentation produced in me some glimmering ray of abilities ; but it appeared late in life, and was quickly extinguished. In returning to my natural state, I returned, as it were, to nothing. I existed only for a moment ; it is passed ; and I must bear the disgrace of surviving myself. Reader, if you receive this my last performance with indulgence, you will be kind to my shade ; for as to myself, I am no more.

Montmorency, March 20, 1758.

AN
E P I S T L E

FROM

J. J. ROUSSEAU,

TO

Mr. D'ALEMBERT.

I Have read, Sir, with pleasure your article, under the word *Geneva*, in the seventh volume of the *Encyclopedie*. It was with still greater pleasure I gave it a second perusal; which gave rise to certain reflections, however, that I think it necessary for me, under your auspices, to submit to the publick, and particularly to my fellow-citizens. There is much to be commended in the article above-mentioned: but if the encomiums you have been pleased to bestow on my native country, prevent my returning the compliment to you, my sincerity will be my excuse. To confess my differing from you in certain points, sufficiently explains what is my opinion of the rest.

I shall begin with a subject, that I have the most reluctance to examine, and which is per-

haps least in my province; tho', for the reasons already given, it is what I am not permitted to pass over. This is, the judgment you hold of the doctrine of our ministers, in matters of faith. In admitting that they are lovers of philosophy, and that they are not afraid to stand a philosophical scrutiny, you have paid a very great and very just elogium to that respectable body, which is applicable to them only of all the clergy in the world, and which must serve to increase that respect which they have always testified for you. But when we would do honour to others, Sir, we should do it in their manner, and not in our own, lest they should take reasonable offence at our commendations; which, however well intended, may be nevertheless injurious to the character, and interest, or contrary to the opinions and prepossessions, of those who are commended. Is it possible Mr. d'Alembert can be ignorant that the very name of sectary is always odious, and that such imputations are seldom without their consequences, when thrown out against laymen, and never when against priests?

You will tell me that the point in question relates to facts and not compliments, and that the philosopher hath always more regard to truth than respect to persons: but this pretended truth is not so evident nor so unimportant, that you should venture to advance it without good authority: and I must own I don't see where such an authority is to be met with, to prove that the opinions, professed by a public body, are not really their own. You will possibly add, that you do not impute these opinions to the whole body of the clergy, but to many individuals among them. But *many* in a *small*

number, make so considerable a part of the whole, that they must all be in a great degree affected.

Many of the pastors at Geneva are, according to you, arrant Socinians. This you have boldly declared in the face of all Europe. I will take upon me, however, to ask on what ground you found this assertion? It must be on your own conjectures; on the information of a third person; or on the "confession of the parties in question."

Now, in matters of mere doctrine, which have no connection with morality, how can we judge of the faith of others by mere conjecture? How can we judge of it, indeed, on the credit of a third person, in contradiction to the assurance of the parties themselves? Again, who can tell so well as myself, what I do or do not believe; and who, in such a case, is to be depended on but one's self? If, after having deduced sophistical and disavowed consequences from the conversation or writings of a well-meaning layman, an inveterate priest should found a persecution on such consequences against the author; he would act in character, and no body would be at all surprized. But ought we to endeavour to do honour to worthy men, by the same means a rascal makes use of, to persecute them? And shall a philosopher imitate those captious arguments, to which he hath so often been the victim?

It seems natural to think therefore that those of the Genevan clergy, whom you charge with being Socinians, and rejecting the doctrine of the eternity of hell torments, have in confidence declared to you their opinions. But were these really their opinions, and had they thus confided in you, they would certainly have done it privately,

vately, in the free and ingenuous intercourse of philosophical conversation; they would have entrusted the philosopher, not the author; they have therefore not done it; and my proof of it is, you have published their pretended sentiments*.

I do not take upon me, however, to judge of, or to censure the doctrine you impute to them: I only say, that no one hath a right to charge it on them, unless they profess it; ex-

* I think I have discovered a principle, which if so fully demonstrated as it might be, would immediately disarm superstition and persecution, and appease the rage of making proselytes. This is, that human reason is not a common determinate standard: so that it is unjust for any man to lay down his notions of things as a rule for others. We suppose people to be sincere; otherwise all they say is mere idle prate. To a certain degree there are general principles, and a common evidence; besides which every one has his own particular way of reasoning to guide him; so that this notion does not lead to scepticism. But, as the general bounds of reason are not fixed, and no one can be a judge of those of another person, the peremptory dogmatist is stopp'd short in his career. If peace could ever be established where at present there reigns nothing but self-interest, pride, and conceit, this consideration would soon put an end to the disputes of priests and philosophers. But possibly neither party would find their interest in it, as there would be then no more persecutions or debates; the former would then have nobody to torment, and the latter no body to confute; so that they would have nothing to do.

If it be asked me here, why I dispute myself? my answer is, that I address myself to the majority of the people; that I am endeavouring to explain practical truths; that I rely on experience, discharge my duty; and, having declared my opinion, am not displeased at any one for thinking differently.

cept that it does not resemble any thing they teach us. I know not indeed what Socinianism is, so can say neither good nor ill of it; tho' from some confused notions I have of the sect and its founder, I am rather averse to, than pleased with it: but in general I am a friend to every peaceable religion, in which the supreme Being is worshipped in a manner agreeable to that reason which he hath bestowed on us. When a man cannot believe what he thinks absurd, it is not his fault, it is the fault of his understanding; and how can I ever be brought to imagine that God will punish him, for not having formed his understanding * differently

* It is to be remembered that I am replying to an author, who is not a Protestant; and I conceive the way to answer him effectually, is to shew that what he charges our ministers with doing, would be useless to them, and is what is necessarily done in many other religions, without any notice being taken of it.

The intellectual world, not excepting the region of geometry, is full of incomprehensible and yet incontestible truths; because that reason which proves their existence, cannot penetrate, if I may so express myself, beyond the boundaries by which they are limited; but only sees them at a distance. Such is the doctrine of the existence of the Deity; and such all the mysteries admitted in our Protestant creeds. Those mysteries which are shocking to reason (to use Mr. d'Alembert's phrase) are very different.

Their very contradiction brings them within the reach of the understanding, and we have all the reason in the world to think they have no existence; for tho' we cannot see an absurd thing, nothing is more easy than to see a palpable absurdity. This is the case when two propositions contradict each other.

ferently to that which he hath been pleased to bestow on him. Should a divine come and command me in God's name to believe that the part is greater than the whole, what could I imagine but that the learned professor wanted to make a fool of me? Without doubt the orthodox christian, who sees no absurdity in the mysteries of religion, is bound to believe them; but if the Socinian thinks them absurd, what shall we say to him? Shall we attempt to prove to him that they are not absurd? If we should, he would himself begin by proving it to be an absurdity, to reason about what cannot be understood. What then is to be done? What indeed but to let him alone!

I am not more offended also that those, who serve a forgiving and merciful God, should reject the eternity of hell torments, if they think it incompatible with his justice. Let them in such a case put the best interpretation they can on such scriptural passages as contradict their opinion, rather than give it up: for what else

If you say an inch is as long as a foot, you do not advance an obscure or incomprehensible mystery; but an evident absurdity, a proposition palpably false. Be the proofs in its favour what they will, they cannot equal the demonstration brought against it; because the latter flows directly from the original notions on which all human certainty is founded. Were it otherwise, our reason would depose against itself, and thereby oblige us to renounce its authority; and so far from making us believe this or that tenet, would prevent our believing any thing; because all foundation for belief would be thus subverted. Every man therefore of what religion soever he be, who pretends to believe in such mysteries, either deceives himself, or knows not what he affirms.

can they do? No man is more penetrated with a love and veneration for the sublimest of all books than myself; it affords me daily consolation and instruction, when others only give me disgust. I will nevertheless maintain that even the scriptures themselves, if they were to give us unworthy ideas of the divine Being, we ought in this particular to reject their authority; even as in mathematicks we should reject a demonstration that might involve an absurdity: for how great soever be the authenticity of the sacred text, it is still more credible that our Bibles may have been corrupted than that God should be malevolent or unjust. Such, Sir, are the reasons which would prevent my censuring the opinions of equitable and moderate divines, who should learn from their own doctrines that of toleration; obliging no one to adopt their way of thinking. I will go still farther, and confess that sentiment, so conformable to the state of a rational but feeble creature, so worthy of a just and merciful Creator, are in my opinion far preferable to that stupidity, which converts man into a brute; and to that barbarous spirit of persecution, which takes a pleasure in tormenting, even in this life, those whom it consigns to eternal tortures in the next. In this light, I thank you, in the name of my country, for acknowledging a spirit of philosophy and toleration in her clergy, and for the justice you have done them in this respect. So far we are agreed. But it does not follow that, because they are philosophical and tolerating *, they should be hereticks. I can

* On christian toleration, the reader may consult the chapter, bearing that title in the 11th book of the Christian Doctrine by professor Vernet. He will there

can neither approve nor follow your example, in giving them the names by which you distinguish them, or in imputing to them the doctrines you lay to their charge. Although there may be nothing in such a system dishonourable to those who adopt it, yet I shall be careful of imputing it to our clergy, who have not so done; lest the commendation I might bestow on the occasion, should furnish others with an opportunity seriously to accuse them, and should therefore do them more harm than my encomiums might do them good. Wherefore should I take upon me to answer for the religious creed of other men? I have been sufficiently warned to beware of such rash imputations: many persons having taken upon themselves to answer for mine, by charging me with irreligion, who certainly never looked into my heart. On such, I shall by no means recriminate; one of the obligations religion imposes on me, being to have a regard to the secrets of conscience. We may judge of the actions of men, but should leave it to God alone to judge of their faith.

But I am perhaps too diffuse on a subject, the examination of which does not properly belong to me, and is indeed not designed to be discussed in this letter. The ministers of Geneva need not be obliged to the pens of others

there see reasons assigned why the church ought to act with more circumspection in censuring errors in point of faith, than in condemning those in morals. In all which, it is there shewn how christian moderation, philosophical prudence, and pastoral zeal may be united.

to defend their cause *: neither am I the person they would make choice of for their champion; disquisitions of this kind are also too little consistent with my inclination, for me to pursue them with any pleasure: but having occasion to treat of the article, in which you accuse our clergy of holding opinions, which it is not known that they do hold, my silence on this topic would appear as if I gave credit to your assertion; which I do not. Sensible of the happiness of possessing a body of philosophical and peaceable divines, or rather a corps of officers † of morality and ministers of vir-

* This they have themselves done, as I am informed, by a public declaration; which in my present retirement I have not as yet been able to get a sight of; but I hear it hath been received with approbation by the publick.

Thus I enjoy, not only the pleasure of being the first to pay them the honour they deserve, but also that of finding my opinion unanimously approved. I am indeed very sensible that the exordium of my epistle is rendered in a manner superfluous by their declaration; and therefore might, in any other case, be looked upon as impertinent; but in going to suppress it, I recollected that, while I mentioned the article giving rise to it, the reason above-mentioned still subsisted, and that my silence might be construed into consent. I have permitted, therefore, these reflections to stand; and that so much the more willingly, as, however unseasonable they may be now the affair is happily terminated, they contain nothing but what does honour to the church of Geneva, and may be of use to the public in general.

† Such is the title constantly bestowed, by the abbé de St. Pierre, on the clergy; either to intimate that they really are such, or at least ought to be such.

tue, I am greatly shocked when there is any occasion taken to degrade them into mere churchmen. It is of consequence to us to keep them exactly such as they are. It is of consequence to us also, that they themselves should enjoy that peace, which they teach us to love, and that neither their tranquility, nor our own, should be disturbed by their odious theological disputes. It is, in fine, of consequence to us, to learn from their instruction and example, that candour and humanity are also the virtues of a Christian.

I hasten now to the discussion of a question less grave and serious; but which is important enough to deserve our consideration; and which I shall examine the more willingly, as it is more immediately within my own province: this is the project of establishing a public theatre in Geneva. I shall not trouble you with my conjectures concerning the motives, that might induce you to recommend an institution so contrary to the political maxims of our republick. Whatever might be your reasons to propose it, I have only to do with ours for rejecting it: with regard to yourself, therefore, I shall only take the liberty to say that you are certainly the first philosopher*, that ever encouraged a free people, of a small city, and a poor state, to burthen themselves with theatrical entertainments.

* Of two celebrated historians, both of them philosophers, and both admired by Mr. d'Alembert, the modern would be of his opinion: but Tacitus; of whom he is so fond, whose works he studies and translates, the grave and prudent Tacitus, whom he so frequently cites, and whom he sometimes imitates in every thing but his obscurity; would he have been of the same opinion?

I see

I see a number of questions to be discussed in that which you seem to have so easily resolved : for instance, whether such entertainments are in themselves salutary or pernicious ? Whether they are compatible with a people's morals ? Or with the austerity of manners necessary to a republic ? Whether they should be permitted in any small city ? Whether the profession of a comedian be consistent with probity ? Whether the actresses can possibly be as prudent as other women ? Whether even good laws are sufficient to restrain the abuses that might arise from them ? Whether such laws would be observed ? and many others. Every thing is at present problematical with us regarding the actual effects of a theatre ; because the disputes it occasions, are discussed only between the ecclesiasticks and the laity ; and each party places them in the light of their own peculiar prejudices. These researches, Sir, are not unworthy your pen. For my part, without taking upon me to engage in them, I shall content myself in this essay with endeavouring to throw only such light on the subject which you have made necessary. At the same time, I hope you will reflect that in frankly giving my opinion, as you have done yours, I discharge my duty to my country, and that if I lie under a mistake, at least, my error cannot be injurious to any one.

On the first view of theatrical institutions, we see they are intended principally for amusement ; and if it be true that people must have amusement, you must admit that they are lawful only in proportion as they are necessary ; while every useless entertainment is an evil,
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particularly to a being whose life is so short, and whose time is so precious.

The state of man hath its pleasures, which are derived from his nature, and arise from his occupations, his connections and his necessities; and as these pleasures are most agreeable to uncorrupted, innocent minds, they render all others in a manner useless. A father, a son, a husband, a citizen, lie under obligations of so pleasing and interesting a nature, that they can want no amusement more agreeable than the discharge of them. The proper employment of our time encreases its value; while the better it is employed, the less have we still to spare. Thus we find that the habit of labour renders idleness tiresome, and that a good conscience deprives us of all taste for frivolous pleasures. But it is the being dissatisfied with ourselves; it is the weight of indolence; it is the loss of taste for simple and natural pleasures, that give occasion to the expediency of artificial entertainments. I do not like to see the heart set upon theatrical amusements, as if it was uneasy or unhappy within itself. The answer of the barbarian to a person, who had been extolling the magnificence of the circus, and the games instituted at Rome, was dictated by nature itself. Have the Romans, said that honest creature, no wives nor children? The Barbarian was in the right. People imagine themselves to be in company at the theatre, but it is there that every body is alone. We repair thither to forget our relations, our friends, our neighbours; to interest ourselves in fabulous representations, to mourn over the imaginary misfortunes of the dead, or to laugh at the expence
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of the living. But I should have perceived that this is not the language of the present age. Let us endeavour, therefore, to assume one that will be better understood.

To enquire whether public amusements are good or bad in themselves, is a question too vague and indeterminate: it would be to examine into a relation before we had fixed the terms of it. They are made for the people, and it is only from their effects on the people, that we are to determine their real good or bad qualities. There may be an almost infinite variety of such entertainments; and there is a like variety in the manners, constitutions and characters of different people. I allow that man is every where the same; but when he is variously modified by religion, government, laws, customs, prepossessions, and climates, he becomes so different from himself, that the question no longer is, what is proper for mankind in general, but what is proper for him in such a particular age and country. Hence it is, that the dramatic pieces of Meander, calculated for the Athenian stage, were ill-suited for that of Rome. Hence the combats of the gladiators, which, under the republican government, animated the people with courage, and a love of glory, only served, under the emperours, to render the populace brutal, blood-thirsty and cruel. The very same objects, exhibited under different circumstances, taught the people at one time to despise their own lives, and at another to sport with the lives of others.

With respect to the species of public amusements, it is necessarily determined by the particular pleasure they afford the spectators, and
not

not by their public utility. If any utility can be derived from them, it is so much the better; but their principal intent is to please, and provided the people are amused, the end is sufficiently answered. This circumstance alone will ever prevent such institutions from having all the advantages they are capable of; and those persons must be egregiously mistaken, who form an idea of their perfection, so inconsistent with practice, that they would thereby necessarily disgust those whom they were intended to instruct*. Hence arises the diffe-

* “ Some public entertainments are undoubtedly
 “ bad in themselves, as being cruel, indecent or
 “ licentious; such were some of the games among
 “ the Pagans. But there are others of a nature to-
 “ tally indifferent, and which are bad only from the
 “ abuse of them. Thus, for example, dramatic
 “ entertainments have nothing essentially bad in
 “ themselves, in so far as they truly represent the
 “ various characters and actions of mankind.
 “ They might even be rendered, not only agree-
 “ able, but instructive to people of all ranks. But,
 “ if they inculcate corrupt morals, if the actors of
 “ them lead a life of debauchery, and contribute
 “ to debauch others: if such entertainments en-
 “ courage luxury, vanity, idleness, and incon-
 “ tinency; it is evident that they tend to a very
 “ bad purpose; and that, unless a method could
 “ be found to guard against such abuses, we had
 “ better altogether renounce them.” *Instruction*
Chrétienne, T. 3. L. 3. Chap. 16.

Here we see the question fairly stated. The point is, whether the morality of the theatre be really corrupt; whether the abuses are inevitable, and whether the inconveniences arise from the nature of the thing itself; or from extraneous causes, which it may be possible to remove.

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rence of public entertainments, according to the tastes of different nations.

A people of an intrepid, saturnine and cruel disposition, would be fond of perilous and murdering exhibitions, exemplifying valour and resolution: a people ferocious and fiery, would be for bloodshed and battles: a voluptuous people for musick and dancing; a polite nation for shews of love and gallantry; and a light and frivolous people for those of pleasantry and ridicule. *Trahit sua quemque voluptas.*

It is necessary, in order to please them, that their public entertainments should favour their several dispositions, whereas they ought in reason to moderate them.

The stage in general presents us with a picture of the human passions; the original of which is in the heart: but if the poet were not careful to flatter these passions, the spectators would soon be offended; as they would not like to see themselves in such a light as must render them contemptible. If he draws some characters in odious colours, it is such only as are not general, and which are naturally odious. And in this, the poet does nothing more than adopt the public opinion; while even these disgustful passions are always employed to recommend others, more agreeable to the spectators, without being more lawful. Reason is the only thing that is useless on the stage. The character of a man without passions, or who should keep them always under command, would be totally uninteresting: and it hath been already observed that a stoick in a tragedy would be an insupportable personage; and in comedy would at best only make one laugh.

Let us not ascribe to the theatre, therefore, the power of changing sentiments and manners, when it can only pursue and embellish them. A dramatic writer who should oppose the general taste of the public, would soon be left to write only for himself. When Moliere corrected the comic drama, he attacked only ridiculous modes and characters; but in doing this, he indulged the public taste*, as did also Corneille. It was the old French stage that began to displease this taste: because, while the nation improved in politeness, the stage still retained its primitive barbarism.

It is for the same reason, that, as the general taste is so greatly altered since their times, the very best pieces of these two authors, if now first brought on the stage, would infallibly be damned. The connoisseurs may admire them as much as they please; the public admire them rather because they are ashamed to do other-

* Had even Moliere lived earlier, he would have found it difficult to keep his ground; the most perfect of all his writings being damned in its first appearance, because he brought it out too early; the age not being enlightened enough to receive the *Misanthrope*.

All this is founded on an evident maxim; which is that a people often continue to practise customs they despise, as soon as any one starts up bold enough to set the example. In my time, when the fashionable folly of playing with Pantins was at the highest, the comedians only laughed on the stage, at what even those who thus amused themselves, laughed as well as they. But the settled dispositions, customs and prejudices of a people ought always to have some deference paid it on the stage. No poet ever found his account in acting otherwise.

wife,

wise, than from any real beauties they discover in them. It is said, indeed, that a good piece can never miscarry; truly, I believe it; but this is because a really good piece is never disgusting to the manners * of the times. There cannot be the least doubt that the very best tragedy of Sophocles, would be totally damned in our theatres. It is impossible for us to put ourselves in the place of people, to whom we bear no sort of resemblance.

Every author who undertakes to describe foreign manners, is very careful, however, to accommodate his piece to ours. It would be impossible for him to succeed without this caution; and even the success of it often depends on causes very different from those to which it is imputed by a superficial observer. When Harlequin-Savage is so well received by the spectators, can it be thought to proceed from the liking which they have for the sense and simplicity of such a character; or that any one of them has an inclination to resemble him! Quite the contrary. The piece humours the general taste, which is to be fond of novelties; and nothing can be newer to a Parisian audience than a picture of nature. It is their very aversion to things which are usual and common,

* I use the words *taste* and *manners* here indifferently; for, though they do not stand for the same things, they have ever one common original, and are subject to the same revolutions. Not that good taste and good manners always prevail together, which is a proposition worthy discussion, but that a certain degree of taste always answers to a certain state of manners, is indisputable.

that sometimes induces them to return to the most simple.

It follows from the first of these observations, that the general effect of a theatrical entertainment is to enforce the national character, to augment the natural inclination, and to give a new energy to all the passions of a people.

In this sense it should seem that, as this effect is confined to the heightening, and does not extend to the altering, of established manners, the comedy would be salutary for the virtuous, and bad for the vicious. In the first case, however, it still remains to be determined, whether the passions when too much heightened do not generate into vices. I know that dramatic poesy pretends to the contrary; and to purge the passions while it excites them; but I do not readily comprehend this kind of purgation. Can it be that, in order to grow temperate and prudent, we must first be made intemperate and foolish?

“ Oh no ! it is not that, say the partizans
 “ of the theatre. Tragedy, indeed, pretends
 “ that we are to be moved by all the passions
 “ it describes ; but it does not always require
 “ that we should be affected in the same man-
 “ ner as a person really under the tormenting
 “ influence of passion. Its aim, on the con-
 “ trary, is most frequently to excite sentiments
 “ very different from those which actuate the
 “ persons of the drama.”

They farther tell us that, although the poets sometimes make an ill use of their power over the heart, in order to influence the audience in favour of a bad character; this error ought to be imputed to ignorance, or to the depravity
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of the artist, not to the art. They tell us, in short, that a faithful representation of the passions, and the anxieties attending them, alone suffices to make us avoid them with all possible solicitude.

Let us but consult our own hearts, however, at the end of a tragedy, and we shall be convinced of the insufficiency and insincerity of such pleas. Do the emotions, the trouble, the compassion, we feel during the piece, and even some time after it is over, shew any disposition to surmount and regulate our passions? Are those lively and affecting impressions, which grow habitual, and are so often reiterated, proper to moderate our passions and affections in cases of necessity? Why should the sense of pain arising from the passions, efface that of pleasure and transport arising from the same source; and which the authors take care to heighten as much as possible, in order to render their performances agreeable? Are not all the passions known sisters, one of which only is sufficient to excite a thousand? And do not we know that to oppose the one to the other, is only the way to render the heart more susceptible of them all? The only instrument which serves to purge them is reason, and I have already said that reason hath no effect on the stage. It is certain that we do not partake of the feelings or affections of all the characters; for their interests being opposed, the poet must so contrive it, as to induce us to give the preference to one of the parties; otherwise we shall not interest ourselves in any: but he is so far from chusing, to this end, the passions he would make us love, that he is compelled to make choice of those we already prefer. What

I have said of the species of plays, ought also to be understood of the passions and interests that prevail in them.

At London a play interests the audience, if calculated to make them hate the French; at Tunis the prevailing passion is for piracy; at Messina for revenge; at Goa for the honour of burning a Jew. Let an author go retrograde to these maxims*; and, though he may write a very good play, he will find nobody will come to see it. In such a case also, he would be charged with ignorance, and that very justly, for having neglected the very first principle of his art, which serves as a basis to all the rest; that is to please. Thus the stage purges the passions we have not, and irritates those we have. Is not this a medicine admirably administered?

A concurrence of general and particular causes, will therefore always hinder theatrical exhibitions from attaining that perfection they are capable of, and from producing those good effects one might expect from them. But were we even to suppose this perfection as great as possible, and the people as well disposed as one could desire; their effects would still be next

* Thus for example, let him, on the French stage, represent a plain, honest simple clown, incapable of making fine speeches, and destitute of love and gallantry; at the same time, let him represent a philosopher free from prejudices, who, after having been insulted by a bravo, does not think it expedient to be run through the body by the aggressor: then let him employ the whole force of dramatic writing to render these characters as interesting, as the Cid. I am much mistaken if he will succeed.

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kin to nothing, for want of means to render them sensible. I know but of three kinds of instruments, by means of which the manners of a people are to be acted on; viz. the power of the laws, the influence of opinion, and the allurements of pleasure. Now the laws have no access to the stage; where the least restraint* would give pain instead of amusement. The authority of opinion depends on it as little; for instead of the theatre's giving laws to the public, it receives them from it: and with regard to the pleasure we find there, its only effect is to make us the more often return thither.

We shall see if there can be any other. The stage, it is said, if directed as it may and ought to be, would serve to render virtue amiable and vice odious. Well, and what then? Were not honest men respected and knaves detested before there were any comedies? And are they less so in places where there are no theatrical entertainments? The stage serves to render virtue amiable—A great matter truly, to effect what nature and reason had done before! Bad men are rendered odious on the stage—Pray

* The laws may determine the subject and form of the pieces, and their manner of being acted; but they cannot compel the public to be pleased with them. When Nero sung on the stage, he commanded that those should have their throats cut who could not keep open their eyes; and yet he could not keep them all awake, the pleasure of a short nap having been near costing Vespasian his life. O, ye most egregious performers of the French opera, had you but been possessed of Nero's imperial authority, I certainly should not at present have cause to lament having lived too long.

are they less so in society, when they are known to be such? Is it very certain that this odium is to be imputed to the art of the writer, rather than to the actions of which he represents them guilty? Is it very certain that the simple relation of those crimes would fill us with less indignation, than arises from all the glowing colours in which he hath described them? If all his art consists in exhibiting malefactors, in order to render them hateful to us, I see nothing so very admirable in such art; and we have of these too many real examples in real life, to need having any recourse to the fictitious ones of the drama. Shall I venture to add another suspicion that suggests itself? I much doubt whether any person, to whom one should simply relate the crimes of Phædra and Medea, before he saw the play, would not abhor them much more at the beginning of the first act, than at the end of the representation; and if so, what must we think of the so much boasted effects of the theatre?

I should be glad to see it clearly and concisely demonstrated, how the drama can produce sentiments in us that we had not before in our minds, and cause us to judge of moral entities otherwise than we judge of them within ourselves. Believe me, these mighty pretensions, if examined into, will be all found to be insignificant and puerile. If the beauty of virtue were the work of art; it would have been long since defaced! As to myself, let me be treated as a bad man for saying that mankind were born good, I care not, as I think I have fully proved it. The source of our love for virtue, and our hatred to vice, is seated within ourselves, and is not to be found in the play. No

art

act can produce it, although it may take advantage of it. The love of the beautiful * is a sentiment as natural to the human heart as that of self-love. It does not spring from any arrangement or disposition of the scenes: the writer doth not carry it to the theatre, he finds it there; and it is by flattering this purity of sentiment he is enabled to draw forth those tears which sometimes flow from the audience.

Conceive the theatre to be as perfect as you will; where is the man who, on going thither the first time, does not go previously convinced of the truth of what is inculcated there, and already prejudiced in favour of those characters which are rendered amiable? But this is not the point in dispute; it is to act in conformity with our principles, and to imitate those we esteem. The heart of man is always upright, respecting what does not immediately regard his own personal interest. Thus we ever take the side of justice in quarrels, of which we are merely spectators; and feel an high indignation at every baseness, from which we can derive no personal advantage: but when our own interest is concerned, our sentiments are presently corrupted, and it is in this case only that

* I mean here what is *morally* beautiful: for let philosophers say what they please, this love is implanted in human nature, as an innate principle of conscience.

As an example of what is above asserted, I might cite the little entertainment, entitled Nanine, which has made the audience groan, and has been supported merely by the great reputation of the author; and all this, because honour, virtue, and the simplicity of nature are preferred to the impertinent prepossessions of rank.

we prefer the evil, which is useful to us, to the good, which we should otherwise naturally approve. Is it not a necessary effect, inseparable from the constitution of things, that a bad man shall possess a two-fold advantage in all his actions; one arising from his own injustice, and the other from the probity of others? Could he possibly enter into a more advantageous treaty, than to engage the whole world to be honest except himself; so that every one should behave justly towards him, and he unjustly towards every body. He loves virtue, without doubt, but it is the virtue of other people, because he hopes to profit by it; he does not chuse to practise it himself, because it would be hurtful to his interest. What does he go to see and hear therefore at the theatre? Exactly what he would be glad to meet with every where; lectures of moral virtue for the public, out of which number he is himself excepted; and examples of men sacrificing every thing to their duty, while he himself is bound by none.

I hear it said, that tragedy excites to pity by means of terrour; but what is this pity? A transitory and fruitless emotion, which lasts no longer than the illusion producing it: the remains of natural feeling presently stifled by the passions; in a word, only a barren compassion indulging itself in a few tears, but never productive of any act of humanity. Thus did the blood-thirsty Sylla weep at the recital of all those misfortunes which he himself did not inflict. Thus did Alexander, the tyrant of Phææ, hide himself in the theatre, that he might not be seen to sigh with Priam and Andromache, although he could hear without emotion the cries

eries of the unhappy wretches, who were daily butchered, at his commands.

If the observation of Diogenes Laertius be true, that the heart is more affected by imaginary than by real evils; if theatrical representations sometimes cause us to shed more tears than would flow from the actual appearance of the objects represented; it is less, according to the Abbé du Bos, because the emotion is weaker, and does not amount to grief, than because it is pure, and without any alloy of concern for ourselves*. In shedding tears at fictitious misfortunes, we discharge all the duties humanity requires of us on such occasions, without any farther inconvenience to ourselves: whereas, when persons are under real miseries, humanity requires something more: it requires us to afford them assistance, relief and consolation; which would be making us partake of their afflictions, and involve us at least in solitudes, from which our natural indolence would willingly exempt us. Hence it may be said, that the human heart is selfish, and afraid of being hurt by feeling for others. But on the whole, when a man goes to a play in order to admire the heroic actions of fabulous characters, and to weep at imaginary misfortunes, what more can

* The abbé asserts that the poet makes us grieve, only just to what degree we ourselves please; and that he interests us in the fate of his heroes just so far as we think proper. But this is contrary to experience. Many people forbear going to see tragedies, because they are so deeply affecting as to be displeasing: others, again, weep at a play who are nevertheless ashamed of it, but cannot avoid it. And these effects are too frequent not to be more than mere exceptions to a general rule.

be expected of him? Is he not perfectly satisfied with himself? does he not even boast his sensibility? Does he not acquit himself of every thing he owes to virtue, by doing honour to its appearance on the stage? What would we have of him more? Would you have him practise it himself? — He has no part to play; he is no comedian.

The more I reflect on this matter, the more I find that whatever is represented on the stage, is so far from being brought home to us, that it is rather removed to a greater distance. When I see the play of the Earl of Essex, the reign of Queen Elizabeth is in my apprehension thrown two centuries back. And if an event that happened yesterday were to be represented on the stage, I should conceive it to have happened at least in the time of Moliere. The theatre hath rules, maxims and morals, as well as dress, peculiar to itself; of which we very naturally and justly observe nothing of all this is proper for us; and indeed should think it as ridiculous to adopt the virtues of dramatic heroes, as to strut about in shapes, or to talk in blank verse. Of all those sublime sentiments and brilliant maxims, therefore, that are so emphatically extolled in the theatre, it is plain they are calculated only for the stage, representing virtue as a pretty theatrical amusement; the practice of which it would be mighty absurd to think of carrying into life. Thus the most advantageous impression of the best tragedies is to reduce the duties and obligations of life to a few transitory affections, fruitless and ineffectual: just as some polite people conceive they have done an act of charity, in bestowing a
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mere verbal blessing on a poor object, as they pass by.

It is true, that the stage might be made to assume a plainer appearance, and that the language and modes of the theatre might be more accommodated to real life. But manners are described only, not corrected, by such means; for deformity is never shocking to those who are in like manner deformed. And yet should we attempt to correct them by aggravating the description into caricatura, we should depart from nature, the picture would have no resemblance and be of no effect. Exaggeration doth not make objects odious, so much as it makes them ridiculous: whence results this great inconvenience, that we are so afraid of ridicule, that vice no longer strikes us with horror; and yet we cannot cure the former without encouraging the latter. You will ask perhaps, why this opposition should be thought so necessary? Why, Sir! because men of probity never laugh at the vicious, but heartily despise them; nor is there any thing in the world less pleasant or risible than the just indignation of virtue. Ridicule is, on the other hand, the favourite weapon of vice. With this it assails the veneration due to virtue, till even the very sense of it is in time extinguished in the human breast.

Thus are we compelled to renounce that false idea of perfection, which is imputed to dramatic entertainments, as calculated for public utility. It is an error, says a certain grave writer, to expect that in plays we should see the true relations of things; the poet seeking only, in general, to adapt them to the public taste. In comedy, he diminishes every thing, and sinks it below the standard of nature; in tragedy,

tragedy, he is inflated into heroism, and rises as far above humanity as he was before below it. Thus in the theatre all is disproportionate, and we constantly see characters on the stage that are to be met with no where else. So certain indeed, is this disproportion, that Aristotle, in his Art of poetry, lays it down as a rule: *Comedia enim deteriores, tragædia meliores quam nunc sunt imitari conantur.* This is undoubtedly a well intended imitation, that proposeth for its object what has no existence, to the neglect of the mean between deficiency and excess, which really doth exist, as if it were entirely useless! But of what consequence is the exactness of the imitation, if the illusion succeeds? The point is to excite the curiosity of the people. Dramatic productions, like all other master-pieces of human wit, have no other end than public applause. When the author meets with this applause, and the actors share in it, the end of the whole is answered, and they never trouble themselves farther about the matter. Now if it have no good effect, it must have a bad one, and as this is not at all doubtful, the question seems to be determined. But to produce some examples, that may render the solution of it more sensible.

I may venture to advance, as a truth easy to prove, in consequence of the preceeding, that the French theatre, with all its faults, is nevertheless as nearly perfect as it can be, both with respect to amusement and utility; and that these advantages are united in such a proportion, that it cannot be disturbed without taking from one, more than would be given to the other, and therefore would render the stage still more imperfect. Not that a man of ge-
nius

nus might not invent a kind of pieces preferable to those at present in use: but this new kind of drama, standing constantly in need of the author's peculiar abilities to support it, would of course die with him; when his successors, destitute of the same resources, would be forced to have recourse to the ordinary means to interest and please the audience. These means are at present, celebrated exploits, great names, horrid crimes and sublime virtues in tragedy; ridicule and drollery in comedy; and love-scenes in both †. I ask of what advantage can all this be to a people's morals!

It may be said that, in these pieces, villainy is always punished, and virtue rewarded, agreeable to poetical justice. But, admitting this to be always true, yet, as the subjects of our tragedies are mostly fabulous, the known invention of the poet's brain, they make not any great impression on the audience: by letting them see it is our intention to instruct them, our intention is disappointed.

Again, I answer that poetical justice distributes its punishments and rewards in such an unusual manner, that we never can expect to see any thing like it in the natural course of things. And lastly, I reply, by denying the fact. It neither is, nor can be, generally true: for, this not being the principal aim of the poet, he must very seldom be able to attain

† The Greeks were not under any necessity of founding the principal interest of their tragedy on the passion of love; nor indeed did they do it. With us, who have not the same resources, we cannot do without it. The reason of this difference will appear in the sequel.

it; and it would as often be an obstacle to the success of his endeavours to please. It is of little consequence whether vice or virtue prevails, provided the spectator is imposed on by the grandeur of appearances? Thus, on the French stage, which is indubitably the most perfect, or at least the best regulated; we see the triumphs of great villains as well as great heroes; witness Cataline, Mahomet, Atreus, and many others.

I am well aware, that we must not always judge by the catastrophe, of the moral effect of a tragedy; or that the intent is answered, when the spectators are more affected by seeing virtue in distress than vice triumphant: which does not prevent, even then, the pretended rule from being violated. As there is nobody who would not rather have been a Britannicus than a Nero, I admit that we ought to applaud the play, in which their actions are represented, notwithstanding Britannicus perishes in it. But, from the same principle, what judgment shall we form of a tragedy, in which, though the criminals are justly punished, yet they are constantly represented in so favourable a light, that every body is interested in their favour? Plays, in which Cato, the greatest of mankind, acts the part of a mere pedant? In which Cicero, the guardian of the republick, that Cicero who first merited, and was first honoured with the title of Father of his country, is represented as a dastardly coward and pitiful rhetorician; while the infamous Cataline, guilty of unheard-of crimes, and just on the point of murdering the Roman magistrates, and reducing his native city to ashes, plays the part of an hero, and by his abilities, resolution and
courage

courage conciliates the esteem of the audience? I confess, if you will, that Cataline was a man of fortitude; but was he, for that reason, the less a villain? And ought the detested crimes of a public robber to be represented in the same glowing colours as the exploits of an hero? To what, therefore, tends the moral of that piece, except to encourage future Catalines, and to bestow on wicked men of great talents the applause which is due only to men of great virtues. But such is the taste a poet is obliged to comply with: such are the manners of an enlightened age! Learning, wit and courage only attract our admiration; while thou most meek and modest Virtue, thou remainest alone unhonoured! Blind as we are in the midst of such a profusion of light! Absurd victims to our own applause, shall we never learn how detestable is the man, who misapplies and abuses the talents, given him by nature, to prove the plague and misfortune of mankind!

The tragedies of Atreus and Mahomet have not even the poor resource of a catastrophe: the monster, who is the hero of each of those pieces, attaining the end of his villainy, and enjoying the fruits of it in peace. One of them says in express terms in the last verse;

Et je jouis enfin du prix de mes forfaits †.

I am indeed loth to suppose that, when the spectators are dismissed with this most excellent maxim, they will actually conclude thence that vice is constantly rewarded with pleasure and profit; but I would willingly ask them what

† *At length I reap the fruits of my misdeeds.*

profit

profit they could possibly reap from a play, tending to enforce and illustrate such a maxim.

With respect to Mahomet, the fault of fixing the public admiration on a guilty character, would have been so much the greater in this play, as the author has given it another colouring, had not he taken care to excite a respect and veneration for a second personage; capable of effacing, or at least of counteracting the terrour and astonishment inspired by Mahomet. The action of this play, especially in the scene where they both appear together, is so artfully conducted, that Mahomet, without acting out of character, or losing any thing of that superiority which is proper and peculiar to him, is eclipsed merely by the intrepidity, the good sense and virtue of Zopirus †. It required a writer
fully

† I remember that I formerly thought there was more fire and sublimity, in the scene between Omar and Zopirus, than in that between the latter and Mahomet: and this I took to be a defect in the piece. On thinking better of it, however, I have altered my opinion. Omar, who is transported with fanaticism, ought to speak of his master with that enthusiastic zeal and admiration, which raise him in a manner above the state of humanity. But Mahomet is not a fanatic: he is a designing villain, who knows it is needless to act the part of a saint in the company of Zopirus: he strives therefore to gain him over, by an affected confidence and motives of ambition. From the part, therefore, he hath here to play, he must of course shine less than Omar; and that because he is in a more exalted station, and hath a greater knowledge of mankind. He gives the audience to understand as much: it was therefore my own fault that I did not perceive it; but this will happen to us petty authors. In
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fully sensible of his own powers, to venture to introduce two such characters in the same scene. Indeed, this particular scene hath not been so universally admired as it deserves: for I know not any one of the whole French theatre, that contains more masterly strokes, or wherein the sacred character of virtue has a more sensible advantage over sublimity of genius.

Another consideration which tends to justify this piece, is, that the poet does not merely intend to expose criminal actions in general, but those which arise from a spirit of fanaticism in particular, in order that the world may be solicitous to distinguish and guard against them. Unhappily such solicitude is not only useless, but is frequently dangerous. Fanaticism is not an error, but an infatuated and blind rage, which can never be restrained by reason. The only way to stop its progress, is to restrain the persons of those who propagate it. It is in vain to remonstrate to madmen, that they are imposed on by their leaders: they will be still as eager to follow them as ever. Wherever fanaticism has once gained ground, there is but one way to check it; which is to assail it with its own weapons. Argument and reason have nothing to do in the affair. You must throw aside philosophy, close your books, draw the sword, and punish the impostors. In respect to Mahomet, I am also farther apprehensive that his magnanimity will serve greatly to diminish the villainy of his

attempting to censure the works of our masters, our ignorance leads us to mistake a thousand things for defects, which in the eyes of good judges are real beauties.

crimes

crimes in the opinion of the audience; and that a play of this kind, represented before persons capable of choice, would tend more to make each a Mahomet than a Zopirus. It is, at least, very certain, that such sort of examples afford very little encouragement to virtue.

No such apology can indeed be made for the character of Atreus: the horror it excites, is all thrown away: we learn nothing of him but to shudder at his villainy: and though he is great only in his rage, there is not a single character in the whole play capable of attracting any share of the attention of the audience with him: for, as to the whining Plisthenes, I cannot conceive how he is even supportable in such a tragedy. Seneca has intermixed no love in his play of Atreus; and as the modern poet thought proper to copy him in almost every other circumstance, he ought to have imitated him in that also. It certainly requires a great pliancy of disposition, to bear with scenes of gallantry joined to those of Atreus.

Before I dismiss this performance, I cannot help remarking one species of merit in it; which may possibly appear to many as a fault. The part of Thyestes comes the nearest to the taste of the ancients, of all those which have been introduced on the French stage: he is neither a hero in point of courage, nor a model of virtue: nor can he be said, on the other hand, to be a villain. He is only a weak man, who engages our pity, and that merely because he is a man, and is unhappy. It is for this very reason that I think, the sentiment he excites is extremely affecting; for this man is in a great measure like ourselves; whereas heroism, being above our reach, rather dazzles the imagination

gination than affects the passions. It is to be wished that our sublime writers would condescend to lower their flights a little, and to move our compassion for the common sufferings of humanity: lest by habitually directing our pity only to unfortunate heroes, we may grow by degrees insensible to all compassion. The ancients had heroes; notwithstanding which they brought the characters of common life on the stage; but we introduce none but heroes, and have hardly any common characters. The ancients spoke of humanity in a less studied phrase than we; but they knew better than we how to practise it. There is a passage in Plutarch which may be applied to them and us with propriety, and which I cannot forbear transcribing. At the theatre in Athens, a venerable old man was looking about for a seat; which some young ones, at a distance perceiving, they beckoned him to come to them, intimating they would make way for him; but when he came near them, they filled up their seat and made a jest of him. The old man went from seat to seat, in great confusion; being all the while ridiculed by the Athenian youth. But the Spartan ambassadors being present, and seeing his distress, rose up and placed him honourably in the midst of them. The transaction was noticed by the whole audience, and the behaviour of the Spartans was received with universal applause: whilst the old man shook his head, and cried, *What a pity! that the Athenians should know what good manners are, but, that the Lacedæmonians only should put them in practice.* Such is the same observation that will hold good between modern philosophy and ancient manners.

To return to my subject. What is it we learn from Phædra and Œdipus, except that man is not a free agent, but that the Deity punishes him for crimes, which he forces him to commit? What from Medea, but that the rage of jealousy may render a mother cruel and unnatural? If we pursue thus an examination into most of our French tragedies, we shall find they abound with monsters of vice and iniquity; whose actions may possibly render the play amusing, and exercise our virtue, but are certainly dangerous, as they accustom the eye to scenes of disgust and horror which ought not to be known, or even thought possible. It is not true, that even murder and parricide are always rendered odious. By the convenient aid of a few arbitrary suppositions, they become lawful or at least excusable. Are we not inclined to pity Phædra, though guilty of incest, and of shedding innocent blood? Even Syphax, who poisons his wife; the young Horatius, who stabs his sister; Agamemnon, who sacrifices his daughter; and Orestes, who cuts the throat of his own mother; are all interesting personages. Add to this, that the poet, in order to make them speak in character, is compelled to put into the mouths of villains, the most abandoned principles and maxims, dressed up in all the pomp of verse and declamation for the improvement of the audience.

The Greeks bore with these performances, because they contained some of their old popular traditions, which had been many ages current among them; for the revival of which they had their peculiar reasons, as they had for exposing some of the characters to public aversion. But, when these reasons no longer subsist, how can the
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the same tragedy find spectators among us, able to bear the shocking images it exhibits to their view, or the villainous characters it introduces on the stage? Here one man kills his father, marries his mother, and discovers himself to be the brother of his own children. Another forces a son to murder his own father. A third compels a father to drink the blood of his son. It is impossible not to be shocked at the bare idea of these horrid scenes; which have been represented on the French stage for the amusement of the most susceptible and humane people in the world. No. I will maintain, and call the horror of my readers to witness, that the shows of the gladiators at Rome were not half so barbarous. They shed human blood, it is true; but they did not sully the imagination with ideas of crimes to make nature shudder. Tragedy, as it stands at present, is happily so far removed from common life, and exhibits to us such gigantic, chimerical and monstrous characters, that the example of their vices is as little contagious as that of their virtues is useful; hence it is at the same time, that the less it attempts to instruct, the less hurtful it is found. It is quite otherwise, however, with regard to comedy; in which the manners have a more direct relation to our own, and the characters have a greater resemblance to human nature. This is altogether bad and pernicious; and the whole of it being interesting and consequential to the spectators; while even the taste for the comic scene being founded on a vicious turn of the human heart, it is one of the corollaries of the principle, that the more perfect and agreeable a comedy is,

is, the more fatal is its effect on manners. But, without repeating what I have already said of its nature, I shall content myself in this place with making an application, and with taking a short view of your comic theatre.

Let us begin with it at the time of its perfection; that is to say, at its birth. It is universally agreed, and becomes every day more and more certain, that Moliere is the best of all our comic writers; and yet it is undeniable that the plays of this very writer, whose talents nobody admires more than myself, afford abundant lessons for vice and corruption; and those still more dangerous than such as are contained in the books, in which vice is professedly taught. His principal attention is to turn innocence and simplicity into ridicule; and to represent the party for whom we interest ourselves as dexterous and cunning. His men of probity are only so in words: his knaves are such in their actions, and are frequently crowned with signal success: in a word, applause is an honour seldom conferred on persons of the greater worth, but almost always on those of the deepest cunning.

Examine the *vis comica* of this author, and you will find that the vices of characters are its instrument, and natural defects its subject; that the malice of the one punishes the simplicity of the other; and that fools are constantly made the prey of knaves. That this is too much the case in the world, is certain; but it ought not therefore to be represented with applause and approbation on the stage, as if knaves were to be encouraged to punish the simplicity of honest people; under the appellation of folly.

Dat

Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas.

Such is the general spirit of Moliere and his imitators. The most that can be said in favour of these people, is, that they sometimes render vice ridiculous, without inducing us to fall in love with virtue: they are people, says an ancient writer, who know well enough how to snuff a lamp, but never put oil into it.

See but in what manner he inverts the whole order of society, to indulge himself in a vein of pleasantry; how scandalously he strikes even at the most sacred ties by which that order is connected; how he laughs at the rights of fathers over their children, of husbands over their wives, and masters over their servants! He makes us laugh with him, it is true; but in this he incurs only greater blame, by forcing even philosophers themselves, by an invincible charm, to countenance raillery which deserves their highest indignation. I hear it said that he attacks vice; but I should be glad to have a comparison made between the vices he attacks, and those he encourages. Which is the most blameable character, a vain blockhead of a citizen, who sets up for a fine gentleman, or the knavish fine gentleman who cheats him? In the performance, however, to which I allude, is not the latter the principal character? Are not the audience all interested in his favour? And is not the public applause lavishly bestowed on the several tricks he plays upon the other? Which, pray, is the most criminal, a clown who is foolish enough to marry a gay young lady, or a wife who endeavours to dishonour

her marriage bed? What can be thought of a piece, in which the pit applaud the deceit, infidelity and impudence of the latter, and laugh at the stupidity of the former? It is undoubtedly a great vice to be covetous, and to lend out money on usury; but is it not a greater crime for a son to rob his father, to behave rudely to him, to reproach, to insult him; and, when his father is so incensed as to bestow his curse upon him, to reply with a sneer, that he will accept none of his presents? Are the jokes less criminal for their being witty and pleasing? And though the son, who throws out these jests, is rendered agreeable by the poet, do they afford a less dangerous lesson of immorality?

I shall not stay to speak of his valets; as they are condemned universally †; and it would be very unfair to charge on Moliere the errors of the times he lived in, or of those he imitated, as he afterwards thought proper to correct himself. I would not take any advantage of the irregularities, that are to be found in his juvenile

† I do not affirm that they ought actually to be condemned. It is very possible they may be only the instruments of the wickedness of their masters, since the latter have deprived them of the honour of invention. I much doubt, nevertheless, whether too exact a picture of society in this particular, would have a good effect on the stage. On the supposition that some little knavish tricks were necessary to keep up the spirit of the play, I know not if it might not be better that servants alone should be concerned in them, and that reputable people should be people of probity, at least upon the stage.

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performances, nor of those particular passages which are less perfect than the rest in his other plays : but would proceed at once to that, which is allowed on all hands to be his master-piece ; I mean the *Misanthrope*.

Of all Moliere's comedies, this is that which affords us the clearest insight into the nature of his design in writing for the stage ; and enables us best to judge of the real effects of his dramatic performances. As the first object was to please the public, he consulted the general taste of the people ; on which he formed his plan, and according to this, drew a contrast between contrary failings ; thence forming his characters, and interspersing them throughout his plays. His design was not to draw a man of probity, but a man of the world : so that it is plain he did not want to correct vice, but folly ; to which end, as I have already observed, he found vice to be a very proper instrument. Being determined, therefore, to expose to ridicule, the several defects, opposed to the qualifications of an agreeable and social character ; and having exhausted his subjects, there remained for him only one species of the ridiculous, on which to exercise his talent ; this was the extravagance of virtue, an extravagance which is looked upon by the world as the most ridiculous of all ; and this is what he has done in his *Misanthrope*.

You cannot deny me two things ; the one is, that *Alceste* in this play is described on the whole as an upright, sincere, ingenuous and worthy man : the other is, that the author has endeavoured to make his character appear ridiculous. This is sufficient, in my opinion, to render Moliere inexcusable. It may be ob-

jected indeed, that the object of the poet's ridicule is not the virtue of Alcestes, but a real defect, his hatred of mankind. But it is not true that Alcestes entertains any such hatred: let not the reader be imposed on by the mere name of misanthrope, as if the character which bears it were an enemy to human-kind. Such an enmity would not be merely a defect, but a depravation of nature, and the greatest of all vices: for all the social virtues being reducible to benevolence, nothing can be more directly contrary to them than inhumanity. Could a real misanthrope exist, he would indeed be a monster, that would be so far from exciting our laughter, that he would fill us with horror. You possibly may have seen, at the Italian comedy, a piece entitled, *Life is a dream*; if you can recollect the character of the hero of that piece, there you have a real misanthrope.

But what kind of a misanthrope is Moliere's? An honest man who hates the licentious manners of his age, and the profligacy of his contemporaries: a man who, out of a love to his fellow-creatures, detests the mischief they do to each other, and the vices from which such mischief takes its rise. Were he less affected with the failings of humanity, less irritated at the wickedness to which he is daily a witness, would he be himself the more humane? It might be as well pretended that a tender and indulgent father loves other men's children better than his own, because he is displeased at the faults of the latter, and is indifferent about those of the former.

That this is the real character of Moliere's misanthrope, is fully shewn, and his sentiments suf-

sufficiently explained, in the course of the play. I own that he tells us, he hath conceived an inveterate hatred against mankind: but on what occasion is this said? * Even at the very time when, justly incensed at seeing his friend meanly speak against his conscience, and deceive the man who asks his advice; this friend is laughing at him in the midst of his anger. It is very natural that such a circumstance should aggravate his passion to excess; and cause him to say more than he would have done in cold blood. Besides, the reason he gives for this universal hatred is a very good one;

— les uns, parce qu'ils sont mechans,
Et les autres, pour être aux méchans complai-
sans †.

He is not an enemy to mankind, therefore, but to the villainy of one part of them, and the countenance such villainy receives from the other. He would love the world well enough, if it contained neither knaves nor sycophants. In this sense every man of probity is a misanthrope, or rather, a real misanthrope is a man of

* The reader is desired to take notice, that, having no books nor papers by me, but all my materials consisting of a confused recollection of observations formerly made at the theatre, I may possibly be mistaken in my quotations and invert the order of his plays. But if my examples should not prove so very accurate, my reasons will not be the less just; as they are not deduced from this or that particular play; but from the general spirit of the theatre, which I have well studied.

† ——— Some because they are knaves,
And the others because they are civil to knaves.

a different way of thinking: for in fact, I know not a greater enemy to mankind than he who is a friend to every body, and is pleased with every thing that is done. It is such a man who gives constant encouragement to knaves, and flatters those vices which are productive of all the disorders of society.

A certain proof that Alceste is not a misanthrope in the literal sense of the word, is, that with all his grumbling, he does not fail to interest and please us. None of the audience indeed would probably chuse to resemble him, because such rigid integrity is very troublesome: but not one of them all would be averse to the having connections with a man of his character, which would never be the case were he a declared enemy to mankind. In all the other pieces of Molière, the ridiculous personage is rendered odious or despicable: but in this, notwithstanding Alceste has real foibles which we may laugh at very innocently, we yet feel such a respect for him in our hearts, as it is not in our power to suppress. On this occasion it is, that the force of virtue prevails over the art of the poet, and does honour to his character. Molière, although he wrote some plays that are very exceptionable, was himself an honest man, and never could the pencil of an honest man be brought entirely to disguise in odious colours the features of sincerity and probity. To this it may be added, that Molière hath put into the mouth of Alceste so many of his own maxims, that many persons have thought he intended to draw it for his own character. This appeared from the concern evidently shewn by the pit, on the first night of representation, on account of their not
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being of the misanthrope's opinion with regard to the sonnet; as it was very plain that it was the real opinion of the author.

This virtuous character, however, is exhibited as ridiculous; it is true, indeed, that in some respects he is so, and what sufficiently shews the poet's design to make him appear so, is the contrast which he hath made between the character of Alceste and that of his friend Philintes. This Philintes is the sensible man of the play; one of those honest men in high life, whose maxims greatly resemble those of knaves; one of those moderate men, who think things always go well, because they are interested in their not going better; who are satisfied with every body, because they care for no body; who maintain, round a plentiful table, that it is impossible the poor should be starving; and having their own pockets well lined, are very averse to hear any advocate for poverty: one of those who, if their own house were secure, would not give themselves any trouble, though all the rest of the world was ransacked and plundered, massacred and destroyed; God Almighty having blessed them with an admirable share of patience to support the misfortunes of other people.

It is plain that so calm a reasoner as Philintes, is a very proper person to work up the other to a ridiculous excess of passion; and the error of Moliere lies not so much in having given his misanthrope a choleric disposition, as for making him burst into puerile fits of passion, with regard to trifles which ought not to affect him. The character of the misanthrope is not at the poet's disposal, but is determined by the nature of his predominant passion. This is a

fixed and violent hatred to vice, arising from an ardent love to virtue; and is constantly irritated by the iniquities of mankind. It is a passion, therefore, of which none but a great and noble soul can be susceptible. The contempt and horror, which it encourages also against the several vices by which it is irritated, serves to banish those vices still farther from an heart thus affected. Besides, this continual contemplation on the disorders of society, detaches him of course from his own concerns, to interest him in those of mankind in general. This habit elevates and ennobles his ideas, while at the same time it checks and destroys all those mean inclinations which arise from self-love; a concurrence of circumstances which gives birth to a certain species of fortitude and generosity of character, that make the mind disdain to amuse itself with sentiments unworthy its attention.

Not but that man is still man; passion often renders him weak, unjust and unreasonable: he looks too frequently into the private motives of the actions of others, with a secret pleasure to see the inward corruption of their hearts; he is inflamed with passion at trifling evils, and an artful designing knave will often be able, by means of studied provocation, to make him appear bad himself. It is, nevertheless, very certain, that this is not to be effected by any kind of methods but those adapted peculiarly to his character: without this caution it would be substituting another kind of man for the misanthrope, and endeavouring to describe him by features different from what are really his own.

Hence

Hence we see, in what light the foibles of this character should be exhibited, and also what Moliere hath made such an admirable use of in all the scenes between Alcestes and his friends; in which the dry maxims and raileries of the latter, make him constantly throw out a number of impertinences very opposite to the business of the scene. But this rigid and morose disposition, which occasionally gives him so much acrimony and bitterness, should secure him at the same time, from every puerile chagrin that hath no reasonable foundation; and from displaying too strongly any personal interest in things which ought not to affect him. Let him rail against the prevailing vices, while he is only a witness of them; this only adds an additional heightening to the portrait, but let him be calm with regard to injuries done to himself. For having declared open war against the vicious, he must expect they will declare it in their turn against him. If he did not foresee the inconveniences his frankness would bring on him, it would be an absurdity and not a virtue.

Let a false woman deceive him; let his weak friends abandon him; he ought to bear it all without murmuring. He knows the world.

If these distinctions are just, Moliere hath not given the just likeness of a misanthrope. And was this done through mistake? Doubtless, not at all. But you see how far the desire of raising a laugh at the expence of the character, hath obliged him to degrade it, contrary to the truth of the drama.

How comes it that, after the adventure of the sonnet, Alcestes does not expect the ill behaviour of Orontes? Why should he be sur-

prized when he is informed of it ; as if it were the first time in his life that he had been open and sincere, or the first time that his sincerity had made him enemies ? Ought he not to have calmly prepared himself for the loss of his suit, instead of expressing a childish resentment beforehand ? What a piece of puerile spite !

Ce sont vingt mille francs qu'il m'en pourra coûter ;

Mais pour vingt mille francs j'aurai droit de pester *.

The misanthrope hath no need to purchase the privilege of railing at so dear a rate, he need only open his eyes and look about him ; and he does not set such a value on money as to imagine he hath acquired any new privilege by losing his cause : but at all hazards the audience must be made to laugh.

In the scene with Dubois, the more reason Alcestes hath to be angry, the more command he should have over his temper, because the stupidity of the servant is by no means a vice. The misanthrope, and the passionate man, are two distinct and very different characters ; and this was a very proper occasion on which to distinguish them. Moliere could not be ignorant of it ; but it was necessary, as before observed, to make the pit laugh.

At the risk of making the reader also laugh at my expence, I will venture to accuse this writer of having missed the opportunity of displaying his regard to truth, propriety, and per-

* It may cost me twenty thousand livres,
But for twenty thousand livres I shall have a right
to rail.

haps beauty of character. To have done all this, he should have made such an alteration in his plot, that Philintes should have been a necessary actor in the intricate part of the piece; while the actions of Philintes and Alcestes might be set in contrast with their principles, and in perfect conformity to their characters. What I mean is, that the misanthrope should have been always enraged against public vices, and indifferent to the personal insults offered to himself. On the other hand, the philosophical Philintes ought to regard the vices of society with a stoical phlegm, and to be furiously resentful on the least injury done immediately to his own person. And indeed, I have remarked it as fact, that those people who are so easy in respect to acts of public injustice, are ever the most vociferous upon the least injustice done themselves; preserving their philosophy and temper only so long as they have no occasion to apply it to their own use. They resemble the Irishman, who would not rise from bed, though told the house was on fire. "What does it concern me?" said he, I am but "a lodger." When the flames had reached his room, however, he began to bestir himself, and to think we ought sometimes to be interested in the safety of the house we live in, although we may be only lodgers.

It appears to me, that if Moliere had thus managed these two characters, each would have been more just and regular; and that of Alcestes in particular, would have had a better effect: but in such a case, the audience could have laughed only at the man of the world;

whereas the poet's design was for them to laugh at him who despised the world *.

It is with the same view he introduces him in a scene of humour, in a manner quite inconsistent with a man of his character. Of this nature is the following conceit in the scene of the sonnet :

*La peste de ta chute, empoisonneur au diable !
En eusses-tu fait une à te casser les nés †.*

An expression by so much the more inconsistent in coming from the misanthrope, as he himself had censured some much better in the sonnet of Orontes. It is also very extraordinary that the person who uses it, proposes the song of King Henry, but a moment afterwards, as a model of taste. It is of no importance to object that this expression comes from him when he is in a passion ; for anger seldom inspires conceits ; and Alcestes having been constantly a grumbler, ought even in his grumbling to assume a tone agreeable to his character.

* I doubt not that a man of genius might, on the plan here sketched out, draw a new Misanthrope as just and as natural as the Athenian, of equal merit with that of Moliere, and incomparably more instructive. There is but one inconvenience to attend such a play ; which is however an important one ; it would be impossible for it to meet with success. For, say what you please, nobody chuses to have the laugh against himself. Thus we are led to recur to my first principles.

† Plague take thy fall, thou poisoning devil !

Would thou hadst received a fall that had broken thy nose.

Morbleu ! vil complaisant ! vous louez des sotises †.

Thus should the misanthrope have expressed himself, in a passion : after which no pointed conceit would ever have gone down. But the spectators must be made to laugh ; and therefore virtue must be debased.

It is very remarkable that the heightenings, which the poet hath given the part of the misanthrope, have obliged him to soften the essential strokes of his character ; so that, altho' in all his other plays, the parts are overdone, in order to produce a better effect, in this the features are deadened, with a view to render the character the more ridiculous. This is evident by the very scene of which I have been treating. We there see Alcestes using shifts and fetches, to inform Orontes of his opinion. But this is by no means consistent with his character as a misanthrope : he acts in this the part of a man of the world, who is yet honest enough to feel some reluctance in deceiving the person who consults him. To act up to his character, he should have bluntly said to him, " Sir, your sonnet is not worth a farthing ; commit it to the flames." But this would have superseded the mirth arising from his apparent perplexity, and from his reiteration of, *I do not say that*, which in the main ; however, is a falsehood. If Philintes, after his example, had said to him on this occasion, *What is it you say, traitor ?* What answer would his frankness have made him ? In truth, it is not worth while to be a misanthrope by halves ; for, if

† Zounds ! what a servile wretch to praise such nonsense.

once the least shifting and deviation from truth be allowed, what motive can he have to stop before he becomes as false and complaisant as any courtier of them all?

The friend of Alcestes ought also to have known him. How could he venture to propose his paying a visit to the judges; that is, in plain terms, to strive to bribe them? How could he suppose that a man, who neglects even the common forms of civility out of a love to virtue, should be capable of neglecting his duty, out of motives of interest? To seek to bribe a judge! It is not necessary a man should be a misanthrope; it is sufficient that he is a man of common honesty, to deter him from attempting such a thing. For what turn can be given to it; either the solicitor must do it to prevail on the judge to do his duty; in which case the offer is an affront; or he must propose a partial acception of persons, and endeavour to seduce them. Now such partiality is to the highest degree criminal in a judge; who should take cognizance only of the fact, and not of the parties, but determine strictly according to law. To induce a judge to commit a criminal action, is also the same as to commit it one's self; and it is much better to lose even a just cause than to be guilty of a criminal action to gain it. This is clear, precise and undeniable. I am not to learn that the morals of the world are founded on different maxims: but it is enough for me to shew, that wherever Moliere exposes the misanthrope to ridicule, the latter acts the part of a man of probity; and that his character was not sufficiently developed, if his friend supposed him capable of acting otherwise.

'If this masterly writer sometimes gives a full scope to this character, it is only when it serves to give a more theatrical colouring to the scene, and produces a more striking contrast, or a more whimsical situation. Such, for example, is the fullen taciturnity of Alcestes; and the spirited censure of the conversation at the apartment of the coquette.

Allons, ferme, poussez, mes bons amis de cour*.

The author hath here strongly marked the distinction between the calumniator and the misanthrope. The latter, with all his gall and asperity, abhors calumny and detests satire. He attacks only public vices, and bad men in general. Private detraction he thinks so mean and low as to be altogether unworthy of him. He hates and despises it in others; and, if he speaks ill of any body, he begins by saying it to their face. Thus he acts his part no where in the whole play so well as in this scene: because he is here what he ought to be: and if he makes the pit laugh, a worthy auditor need not blush to join in their merriment.

It cannot be denied, however, in general, that if Alcestes were more of a misanthrope, his character would be much less entertaining: because his resolution and frankness, admitting of no turns nor shifts, would never involve him in embarrassments. It is not, therefore, out of regard to him, that the author sometimes softens his character; on the contrary, it is done with a view to render him more ridicu-

* Come on, bravely, push on, my good courtly friends.

lous.

lous. There is also another reason for it, which is this; the misanthrope of the theatre being to speak of what he is an eye-witness of, must reside in the midst of society, and of course must temper his manners and integrity, with some little regard to those peccadillos of falsehood and deception, which constitute politeness, and which the world exacts from every one who is desirous of standing fair in it. Were he to behave otherwise indeed, his discourse would have no effect. The business of the writer is to represent him as ridiculous, not as a madman or a fool; and such he would appear in the eyes of the public, if he were altogether a philosopher.

It is difficult to lay aside this admirable play, when once it is taken up. The more I examine it, the more I discover its beauties. But as, of all Moliere's plays, it is without contradiction the best in point of morals, we may from this form a judgment of the rest; and must agree that, the author's design being to please a corrupted audience, either his moral hath a tendency to vice, or that the apparent virtue it recommends is for many reasons more dangerous than vice itself. It is so, in that it is seductive under the specious garb of reason; in that it teaches us to prefer the customs and maxims of the world to strict integrity; in that it makes wisdom consist in a certain medium between virtue and vice; and in that, to the great convenience of the audience, it inculcates that, in order to be an honest man, it is sufficient not to be an arrant villain. I should have too much the advantage in the argument, if, after the examination of Moliere, I should proceed to criticise on his successors; who have had

had neither his genius nor his honesty; and yet have more steadily pursued the same interested views; making it their business to flatter the profligate youth and licentious women of the times. These were the writers who first introduced those gross double entendres, no less contrary to good taste than to good manners, which so long constituted the amusement of bad company, embarrassed modest persons; and which a more polite mode of behaviour hath not as yet banished from some of our provinces. There are other authors, more reserved indeed in their expressions, who leave the former to amuse abandoned women with obscenity, and turn their thoughts to the encouragement of cheats and pick-pockets. Regnard, who is one of the least licentious among them, is however not the least dangerous. It is incredible that the civil police should permit a comedy to be acted in the midst of Paris, in which is represented a dying uncle attended by his nephew, the worthy hero of the piece; who is employed all the while, with his comrades, in such services as the law usually rewards with a halter; and instead of shedding tears, as a duty which mere humanity would require of strangers on the like occasion, is engaged in displaying his wit by throwing out barbarous jests on the solemnity of the scene. Here we see the most sacred obligations, and the most affecting sensations of nature exposed to the wantonness of ridicule; and the most criminal acts are placed in such a ludicrous light as to make the whole pass for wit and good breeding. Inhumanity, forgery, fraud, theft, lying, are all practised and applauded in this scene. The
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supposed deceased thinking it convenient to revive, to the great mortification of his nephew, and refusing to ratify what they had been doing in his name, his consent is extorted from him by violence, and the whole concludes greatly to the satisfaction of the players and spectators; who, being involuntarily interested in the actions of these wretches, leave the theatre with the very edifying reflection that they have in their hearts been accomplices to the crimes which they had seen committed.

Let us have fortitude enough to speak without disguise. Who is there among us that is certain he could sit through a whole representation of a play of this kind, without being made a party as it were, in the knavish tricks and expedients practised in it? Who is there that would not be a little displeased, if the thief should happen to be detected or miss his aim? And who would not for a moment become a thief himself, by being interested in, and wishing success to the thief? For what is our being thus interested for him better than putting ourselves in his place? An excellent school this for youth, in which grown persons find it so difficult to guard against the allurements of vice! Not that I mean by this, to insinuate that villainous actions are never to be exposed on the stage. But this I say, that, in order to introduce villainous characters there with propriety, it is requisite the poet should be a very honest man.

These faults are so inherent in our theatre, that we should disfigure it by endeavouring to correct them. Our modern authors, influenced by a better taste, write more decent plays; but

but what is the consequence? They have no humour, and are attended with hardly any success. It is true, they are very moral and instructive; but they are equally dull and tedious. One might as well sit to hear a sermon.

The stage being in this state of declension, our poets find themselves under a necessity of substituting fallacious ornaments, calculated to impose on the multitude, instead of real beauties. Finding themselves incapable of supporting the *vis comica*, and a just delineation of characters, they have enhanced the influence of the passion of love. The like hath been done in tragedy, in order to supply the want of incidents arising from political motives, which are no longer considered as interesting, and of those simple and natural sensations, by which we are no longer affected. Rival authors vie with each other, for the sake of public utility, to give new energy and colouring to this dangerous passion. Hence it is that ever since the time of Moliere and Corneille, nothing hath succeeded on the French stage but amorous romances, under the title of dramatic pieces.

Love is the empire of the fair sex. Here they must necessarily give law; because, according to the order of nature, resistance belongs to them, and the men cannot overcome that resistance without giving up their liberty. The evident tendency of such kind of entertainments, therefore, is to extend this empire of the sex; to render women the governesses of the publick, and to invest them with the same authority over the audience at a play-house, as they have over their lovers every where else. Can you imagine, Sir, that this inversion of the order of things will be attend-
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ed with no inconveniency; or that the extraordinary pains which are taken to augment the ascendancy of the women, will cause the men to be better governed?

There may possibly be found in the world some few women, worthy of being consulted by an honest man; but are the men to take counsel of the women in general; and is there no method of doing honour to their sex without debasing ours? I confess that a virtuous and lovely woman, is the most charming object in nature; the most capable of affecting a susceptible heart, and of leading it to virtue. But where is this celestial object concealed? Is it not cruel to amuse us with the contemplation of such ravishing objects on the stage, to make us feel more severely the disappointment of finding them so very different in common life? The seducing picture however has its effect. The enchantment produced by these prodigies of female prudence, is turned to the advantage of the licentious part of the sex.

The first step which a youth, who knows the world only from the stage, takes toward virtue, is to go in search of a mistress to lead him the way; flattering himself that he shall find a Constantia or a Cenia † at least. And thus, on the credit of an imaginary model, a modest air, and an affected softness of behaviour, *nescius auræ fallacis*, the silly youth runs on to de-

† It is not from inadvertence that I quote Cenia on this occasion, although that agreeable performance was written by a lady. For, being a sincere enquirer after truth, I conceal nothing that makes against me: and it is not this or that lady, but the gene-

destruction, while he conceives he is in the way of wisdom.

This furnishes me with an occasion for proposing a kind of problem. The ancients had, in general, a great regard for the fair sex †: but they shewed it by keeping them from the public eye; and imagined they did honour to their modesty, by being silent about their other virtues. It was a maxim with them that the purest manners always prevailed in those countries where the least was said of the women; and that she must be the most virtuous who was least the subject of conversation. On this principle it was, that a Lacedemonian, hearing a foreigner run on greatly in commendation of a lady of his acquaintance, angrily interrupted him, and asked him if he would never have done depreciating a virtuous woman? Hence

generality of the sex, whom I deny to have talents and abilities equal to ours. I honour the author of *Cenia* in particular the more readily, because, having occasion to censure some part of her work, the compliment I pay her appears thence sincere and disinterested, as indeed are all those which at any time flow from my pen.

† Thus they gave them several titles of honour, which are either obsolete, or are thought low among us. The use, which Virgil made of the word *matres* on an occasion, wherein the Trojan mothers were not very prudent, is well known. We have no other word for it than *Dames*, which by no means is suitable to all ranks, and besides is insensibly growing obsolete, and has been altogether banished polite company. It is remarkable that the ancients were more inclined to take their titles of honour from the rights of nature, and that we derive ours from the privileges of rank.

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it was also, that in the ancient comedies, the parts of women concerned in amours, were generally given to slaves or common strumpets. They entertained such an idea of the modesty of the sex; that they would have concluded it a breach of decorum to have represented a woman of virtue on the public stage *. In a word, the picture of naked vice was less offensive to them than an affront to modesty.

With us, on the contrary, the women held in highest estimation are those who make the most noise; who are the most talked of, the most frequently seen in public; who keep most company; who are the most positive, and give themselves the most insolent airs; who assign the due degrees and rewards to abilities, virtue and merit: in fine, those of whom the humble literati most servilely solicit protection. On the stage, it is still worse. In the world, the women, in fact, know nothing; though they take upon them to judge of every thing: but on the stage, thanks to the authors, they are made learned and philosophical by the learning and philosophy of the men; hence they foil us at our own weapons; while the foolish spectators go to learn of the women, what they themselves have learned of the men. All this is, in fact, making meer tools of them, and imputing to them a most childish vanity; at which I doubt

* If they neglected this rule in tragedy, it was because, according to their system of theatrical politicks, they did not care if personages of a very high rank should be thought to have no occasion for modesty; these forming always an exception to their rules of morality.

not the more sensible of them conceive a just indignation. Turn over the greater part of our modern pieces ; and you will find it is always a woman that is the most compleatly sensible, and takes upon her to instruct the men : it is always a fine lady teaching little John de Saintrè his catechism. A child cannot eat a crust of bread, without it be cut by a gover-nante. This is the true picture of all our new plays. My lady mistress is on the stage, and the children are all in the pit. Not that I deny this method to have its advantages, and that such preceptors are adapted to give due weight to their instructions : but to the point in hand. I should be glad to know which of the two customs, that of the ancients or ours, redounds most to the honour of the fair sex, and best demonstrates the regard which is due to them.

The same cause which, both in our tragic and comic pieces, gives to women the ascendant over the men, gives to youth also the superiority of age ; another inversion of the natural order of things, no less reprehensible. As the audience are always prepossessed in favour of lovers, it follows that people advanced in years can never play any but subordinate characters. Thus, either to form the intricacies of the plot, they serve as obstacles to the inclinations of the young lovers, in which case they are odious ; or they become amorous themselves, and of course ridiculous. *Turpe senex miles.* In tragedy they are represented as tyrants and usurpers ; and in comedy as jealous, usurious, pedantic and sordid old fellows, whom all the world conspire to deceive. Such is the honourable light in which old age is represented at the theatre ; and great must be the respect young people

people are hence taught to pay to it. Thanks to the celebrated author of *Zara* and *Nanine*, for having preserved the venerable *Lusignan*, and the good old *Philip Humbert* from this contempt. Some few other writers merit also the like acknowledgments; but will this suffice to stem the torrent of public prejudice, and to efface those degrading impressions, which we have imbibed from most of our dramatic authors, of age, wisdom, experience and authority? Who can doubt that the habit of seeing old men constantly represented in odious colours on the stage, contributes to render them disgustful in society; and that, by being used to confound those we meet in the world, with the dotards and fondle-wives of the stage, we despise them all alike?

Observe at an assembly in *Paris*, the self-sufficient, vain, and insolent behaviour of our young men; while the old are so timid and modest as hardly to put in a word, or if they venture to open their lips, they hardly ever attract attention. Nothing like this is seen in the provinces, or in towns where they have no theatres: but, on the contrary, throughout every part of the world excepting great cities, grey hairs are held in veneration.

It will be said, perhaps, that the old men at *Paris* contribute to make themselves contemptible, by renouncing that gravity of carriage and demeanour which becomes their age, to assume the dress and manners of youth; and that it is but just, when they set up for gallants like young people, that the latter should have the preference in their own profession. But the state of the case is quite different: it is, because the old men have no other method to gain admittance

mittance into company, that they make use of this; being rather glad to recommend themselves to society by becoming ridiculous in it, than to be entirely excluded from it. For it is very certain that they are far from becoming really agreeable by affecting it, or that a gallant of sixty can be a very engaging lover. He reaps some advantage, however, even from his inconsistency; as it is adding another triumph to a lady, who thinks the having a Nestor in her train, a proof that, even the coldness and indifference of age cannot withstand the influence of her charms. It is for this reason the women encourage as much as possible these elders of Citherea, and are malicious enough to behave to the old fools as if they were amiable; when they would be found less agreeable if they were less extravagant. But to return to our subject.

These are not the only effects, which arise from the practice of deducing the interesting part of the scene from the passion of love. There are many others imputed to this cause, much more serious and important; the reality of whose existence I shall enquire into, altho' they have been frequently and forcibly alledged by our ecclesiastical writers. They have been answered indeed, by saying that the dangers which might proceed from the seductive picture of a contagious passion, are perverted by the manner of exhibiting it: that the love represented on the stage is of the lawful kind, and its design virtuous; that it is often sacrificed to duty and probity; and whenever it becomes criminal, meets with condign punishment. All this is very well; but is it not

mighty pretty thus to pretend to regulate the emotions of the heart by the dictates of reason, after those emotions are actually excited ; or to say that we must wait for the catastrophe, to know what impressions we are to receive from the circumstances producing it ? The stage is censured, not because it encourages criminal passions, but because it encourages too great a sensibility ; which is afterwards gratified at the expence of virtue. The tender emotions excited there, have no particular determinate object, but to cause a sense of the want of such object : it does not immediately inspire love, but it prepares the heart for its reception : it does not direct it to any particular choice, but reduces it to the necessity of making a choice. And thus these emotions are rendered innocent or criminal from the use we make of them according to our natural disposition or character ; which is independent of the example represented. Were it even true that none but lawful passions are exhibited on the stage, would it thence follow that their impressions are less forcible, or their effects less pernicious ? Is the lively image of an innocent affection less seductive, and less capable of moving a susceptible bosom, than the representation of a criminal passion ; against which a detestation of the vice may serve at least as an antidote. But though the idea of innocence embellishes for a moment the sentiment it accompanies, the circumstances of it are presently obliterated, while the impression of so pleasing, so delightful an emotion remains in the bottom of the heart.

The patrician Manilius was expelled the senate of Rome, for having given his wife a kiss in the presence of his daughter ; but to consider the action simply and of itself, what was there reprehensible in it ? Indubitably nothing ! it denoted even a commendable passion. But the chaste affection of the mother might, nevertheless, excite unchaste ideas in the daughter. It was, therefore, setting a corrupt example by a very virtuous action. Such are the effects of the most lawful amours exhibited on the stage.

Dramatic writers, it seems, pretend to cure us of love, by describing its follies. But, whatever they may think, I find that the spectators constantly take part with the weak lover, and are frequently displeased that he is not still more weak than he is. I ask if this be a good way to avoid resembling him.

You will please, Sir, to recollect a play, which I think I remember to have seen with you some years ago ; and which gave us a pleasure we little expected, either owing to the writer's having introduced more theatrical beauties than we imagined, or to the uncommon talents which the actress usually displays. I mean the *Berenice* of Racine. In what disposition of mind doth the spectator see this play open ? In utter contempt for the weakness of a Roman emperor, whose resolution wavers between his mistress and his duty, like one of the weakest of mortals ; of a prince, who fluctuating in a scandalous uncertainty, disgraces the almost divine character bestowed on him by historians, by his effeminate complaints ; and disgusts us with the idea of the benefactor and delight of mankind, converted into a

whining and despicable lover. But what doth the same spectator think of this character at dropping the curtain? He goes away lamenting the fate of the man he despised, espousing his cause with respect to that very passion for which he before condemned him, and secretly murmuring at the sacrifice he is compelled to make to the laws of his country. This is what we both experienced at the representation of this play. The character of Titus, very well acted, would have had a good effect, had it been more worthy of him; but every body felt themselves principally interested in the fortune of Berenice, and that the fate of her love determined the nature of the catastrophe. Not that her reiterated complaints excited any great emotion during the course of the play; but in the fifth act, when she ceased her vociferous lamentations, and with a mournful air, and her voice quite spent, expressed herself in a dumb scene of sorrow, bordering on despair, the art of the actress adding to the pathos of the scene, the audience were so deeply affected as to burst into tears, when those of Berenice were dried up. What could be the motive of all this, except that they were afraid she should be sent back; and anticipated in their own apprehensions the sorrow she must afterwards feel? At the same time, there was not one of them but would have been glad if Titus had submitted to the dictates of his passion, even at the risk of his honour. We have here a most egregious instance of a tragedy, that answers the pretended end of theatrical institutions, and teaches the spectators to surmount the weakness of love!

The catastrophe, it is true, is not agreeable to the secret inclination of the audience; but what is this to the purpose? The unravelling of the plot does not destroy the preceding effect of the piece. The Queen goes off, without the permission of the pit: the emperor sends her back *invitus invitam*, and I may add *invito spectatore*. Titus may remain as much a Roman as he will, there is nobody takes part with him; the spectators have all married Berenice.

But were even this effect disputable; were it even just to maintain, that the business of the play is constituted by the example of virtue and fortitude, displayed by Titus in subduing his passion, and that this is the reason we compassionate Berenice, though we rejoice at the occasion of it; these assertions would still be coincident with my principles: because, as I have elsewhere observed, the sacrifices made to virtue and our duty, have always a secret and powerful charm over corrupt minds; and this proves that the sentiment in question is not the effect of the play, but was inherent in the breasts of the audience before it began. This last consideration affords no argument, however, that the indulgence of certain passions would not appear in their eye still preferable to virtue itself; or that, though they are well satisfied with bearing testimony to the virtue and fortitude of Titus, they would not be much better pleased to see him happy in the arms of Berenice; or at least that they would not be glad on such terms to be in his situation.

To illustrate this point still farther, we will form the idea of a plot totally different from

that of Racine. We will suppose that Titus, after consulting with himself, should be unwilling either to violate the laws of his country, or to sacrifice his happiness to ambition; and therefore should come, prepared by different maxims, to abdicate the empire, and lay his crown at the feet of Berenice; that this princess, struck with so great a sacrifice, should think it her duty to refuse the hand of her lover on those terms, and yet should at last accept of it; that the happy couple, transported with the charms of love, peace and innocence, should comply with the impulse of nature, the source of all true joy, renouncing empty grandeur, and resolving to live happy in obscurity. Let us suppose that this moving scene should be animated with all those tender and pathetic sentiments which naturally arise from the subject, and which a Racine would have displayed to the greatest advantage; that Titus, on his departure, should take leave of the Romans in a speech adapted to the circumstances and occasion; is it not evident that the writer must be a sad bungler indeed, if such a speech did not draw tears from the whole audience? I am ready to allow that such a conclusion would make the play less virtuous, less instructive, and less conformable to the truth of history; but would it afford less pleasure and satisfaction to the spectators? The four first acts might stand nearly as they do at present, and yet would contain a very different lesson. So certain it is, that love-scenes make a deeper impression than the prudential declamations of wisdom, and that the chief effect of a tragedy is altogether independent of its catastrophe.

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To know whether it be less certain that tragedy, by exemplifying the fatal consequences of immoderate passion, instructs us how to guard against them, we have only to appeal to experience. These consequences are no where more strongly enforced than in *Zara*; they cost the two lovers their lives, and *Orosmanes* still more than his life, because he lays violent hands on himself, to get rid of the most cruel pangs that can torture the human mind; the remorse arising from his having stabbed his mistress. These are, doubtless, very striking lessons! I should be glad to find either man or woman, who could truly say they went home, after seeing *Zara* once acted, sufficiently guarded against this fatal passion. For my own part, I think I hear the men all say to themselves at the close of the play; "Give me a *Zara*, and I warrant I'll take care not to kill her." If the women cannot forbear going in crowds to see this enchanting tragedy, I do not say it is with a view to take example of the heroine to beware of imitating a sacrifice that succeeds so ill. But it is, because, of all the tragedies represented on our theatre, there is none that displays the influence of love, and the power of beauty, to so great an advantage; and in which we learn besides, not to judge of a mistress by appearances. *Orosmanes*, it is true, sacrifices *Zara* to his jealousy; but a woman of any sensibility is not at all terrified at this transport of passion; conceiving it greater misery to be slighted by the object of her love, than even to die by his hand.

Describe the effects of love in what manner you please, it will be a seductive description, or it will not be that of love. If it be ill-

painted, the play is a bad one; if it be well, it makes us blind to every other passion or consideration. Opposition, misfortunes and suffering render it still more affecting, than if it met with no resistance. These afflicting circumstances are so far from rendering it offensive to the spectators, that it becomes the more interesting to them. We are apt involuntarily to confess that so delicious a passion is of itself a sufficient consolation in every kind and degree of distress. An image so tender insensibly melts the heart; we take a view of it only on that side which leads to pleasure, and turn our eyes from it when it begins to hurt us. No one thinks himself obliged to act the part of an hero; and thus it is we are seduced by our admiration of a virtuous passion, to encourage inclinations that are criminal.

But what renders these images completely dangerous is the very means that are taken to make them agreeable; it is, because we never see this passion described on the stage, except between persons of virtue: the two lovers are almost always models of perfection. And how is it possible not to be interested in the passion of two persons, whose natural character renders them so extremely engaging? I question if among all our dramatic pieces, we shall find one in which mutual affection hath not obtained its favour of the audience. If any unfortunate lover should cherish a flame that meets no return, he is always the scorn and disgust of the pit. Dramatic writers think they effect great matters, in making a lover amiable or odious, in proportion as he is successful in his amours; in so managing it that the audience shall constantly approve of his mistress's affections; and

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in giving to the tender passion as considerable an energy and influence as to virtue: Whereas they ought to teach young persons to mistrust the allurements of love, to shun the errors of a blind passion which thinks itself ever founded on esteem; and to be fearful of giving up a virtuous heart to an object unworthy of its affections.

I know not whether it is the misanthrope or the hero of the piece that hath made a bad choice. To describe the misanthrope in love was doing nothing; the masterly stroke was to make him in love with a coquette. The other women in the play are faultless creatures; one would imagine them to be all devotees. Is this a faithful picture of real life? Is this the way to awaken our suspicions of a passion, which often proves so destructive to ingenuous minds? We are almost made to believe, truly, that a man of probity must needs be amorous; and that a woman who loves and is beloved, cannot fail of being virtuous. Excellent instructions these!

But once again; I do not take upon me absolutely to determine whether it be right or wrong to make this passion the principal object of the play: but I say that if the description of its effects is in any case dangerous, it must be always so; however disguised. I say farther, that it must be owing either to insincerity or ignorance, that we ever strive to correct its impressions, by others that are foreign to it, and which never accompany it to the heart; or are presently separated from it; impressions which even disguise the dangers of this deceitful sentiment, and give it new attractions; by means of which it ruins those who indulge it.

Whether the best form of dramatic pieces may be deduced from the nature of the stage in general ; or whether we take a view of what the writers of a learned age and nation have done for the perfection of ours ; I imagine we may justly conclude from these different considerations, that the moral effect of the stage can never be salutary in itself ; since, in reckoning up only its advantages, we find them of no real utility equal to the inconveniences attending it. Now in consequence alone of this inutility, the stage, which can do nothing toward correcting our morals, may do a great deal toward corrupting them. By fomenting all our inclinations, it gives a new ascendant to the ruling passions ; and thus debilitates the mind by continual emotions, and makes us less capable of resisting them. In the mean time, the fruitless interest we take in the cause of virtue, serves only to flatter our self-love without inducing us to be virtuous. Such of my fellow-country-men, therefore, who do not disapprove of theatrical amusements in themselves, are certainly wrong.

But beside these effects of the theatre, which relate to the pieces represented, there are others not less necessary, which relate immediately to the stage and the players. And it is to these the citizens of Geneva impute the taste for luxury, dress and dissipation, which they fear, and very justly, to see introduced into their little republick. It is not only the conversation of the comedians, but even the frequenting the theatre itself, that may produce this pernicious taste, from the brilliant decorations and extravagant dress of the actors. Had a theatre, indeed, no other effect than that of interrupting the

the regular course of civil and domestic concerns, and of affording a constant retreat for idleness; it is impossible but that the convenience of repairing daily to the same place, to forget one's affairs, and bestow one's attention on artificial amusements, must inure a citizen to very different habits, and work a great alteration in his manners. Will these changes, now, be of service or disservice to the community? This is a question, whose determination depends less on an enquiry into the nature of the stage, than into the situation and character of the spectators. It is certain, that in consequence of the above-mentioned alterations, they would all in time nearly resemble each other; it is therefore necessary to begin with their circumstances at first setting out, to judge properly of the difference between them.

If these amusements were even in their own nature indifferent (and I am willing to consider them so for a moment) it is still from the nature of the occupations interrupted by them, that we are to judge whether they are good or bad; especially when they are so engaging as to become occupations themselves, and to give a relish for pleasure instead of business.

It is politic to encourage the amusements of those whose occupations are injurious to society: and to divert from amusement such whose occupations are of public utility. Another general remark is, that it is highly improper, to permit an idle and corrupt people to make choice of their own amusements; lest they should only contrive or adopt such as are agreeable to their vicious inclinations; and thus become as mischievous in their pleasures as

they are in their serious designs. But a simple industrious people may be permitted to divert themselves, after their day's work, in any manner they please; there is never any danger of their abusing this liberty, nor is there any occasion for much enquiry after objects suitable to their taste. We have little need of sauce, when our viands are seasoned by abstinence and keenness of appetite: neither is there any preparation required to divert those who are almost exhausted with fatigue; and to whom even rest alone is an high enjoyment. In great cities, abounding with idle, intriguing people; who have neither religion nor honesty; and whose imagination, vitiated by indolence, the love of pleasure and superfluous necessities, breeds nothing but mischief; in great cities where virtue and moral principle stand for nothing, because individuals can easily conceal their vices, and are sure to gain credit and respect by a superiority of fortune: in such cities, I say, the magistracy cannot be too ingenious in multiplying lawful entertainments; nor in studying to make them agreeable, in order that private persons may not be tempted to look out for more dangerous amusements. To divert, and keep such people from their destructive occupations, is to divert them from doing mischief. The retrenching two hours a day from the influence of vice, would prevent the twelfth part of the crimes that are committed; so that the time spent at the theatre, and in loitering about to coffee-houses and other places of resort for idlers and sharpers, is an advantage to fathers of families, either in respect to the honour of their wives and daughters, or to their purse.

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But in small cities and towns less populous, where individuals being all under the public eye, are born, as it were, to be censors of each other; and where the police may easily take a view of the whole; contrary maxims are to be pursued. If the people are industrious, and are engaged in arts and manufactures, great care should be taken, not to establish any amusement which may divert the attention of avarice, which makes even toil a pleasure, and enriches a state by the covetousness of its subjects. If the country be destitute of trade and manufactories, we should be so far from giving encouragement to that indolent easy life; to which the inhabitants are already but too much addicted, that we ought to render it irksome to them, and thus compell them to take up with some occupation in which their time might be usefully employed. I find, at Paris, where every thing is judged of by appearances because no one hath leisure for examination, it is concluded from the still and lifeless appearance, which country-towns make at first sight, that the inhabitants live together in a stupid inactivity; hardly ever emerging out of a state of vegetation except to fight and quarrel. This is a mistake, however, of which they might easily be cured, did they but consider that most of the literati, who figure at Paris, with most of our useful discoveries and inventions of all kinds, originally come from those contemptible country towns. Make but a short stay in some of them, where you at first imagined you should only meet with clowns and blockheads, and you will find not only people of much better sense than your apish Parisians; but will be almost

almost sure to find some ingenious and obscure person, who will astonish you with his talents and performances; and who, while he is displaying such prodigious efforts of labour, perseverance and industry, will conceive he is shewing you nothing but what is familiarly known at Paris. Such is the simplicity of real genius; it is never busy nor intriguing; it neither knows nor cares for honours or preferment; it makes no comparisons between its own abilities and those of others: but its resources all center in itself alone. Insensible of injuries and almost insensible of praise, it never assumes its proper rank, but is put in possession of it without boasting. There is doubtless, in proportion, less noise and bustle in country-towns than in the metropolis. In the former, the passions are not so violent, nor our wants so urgent: but we there meet with more original characters, more invention and industry, and more real novelty; because there are fewer imitators, from there being fewer models for imitation. Hence every man draws more from his own resources, and puts more of his own design into all his performances: and this because the mind, being less diverted and immersed in vulgar opinions, is more freely agitated in solitude; and because, by seeing less, people are led to imagine more; and in fine, because being less urged for want of time, they have more leisure to digest and extend their ideas.

I remember to have seen, in my youth, at Neufchatel, an object extremely pleasing; and perhaps the only one of its kind to be met with in the world. This was a mountain entirely covered

covered with rustic habitations, each of which formed the centre of its adjacent lands ; so that the houses, being equally distant as the fortunes of the proprietors were equal, they afforded the numerous inhabitants at once the peace of solitude and the consolations of society. These peasants, happy and at their ease, free from taxes, imposts and oppressions, cultivated with all possible diligence, the lands whose property and produce were their own ; employing the time they can spare from husbandry, in works of handicraft, and in making a proper use of that inventive genius which nature hath bestowed on them. In the winter particularly, when the snows are frequently so deep as to deprive them of the conveniency of communication, each family is shut up in a little warm wooden house * of their own constructing ; and are busied in various amusing exercises ; which prevent their being weary of solitude : while at the same time they are conducive to health. They have no carpenters, locksmiths, glaziers or turners, by trade among them ; each family finds its artizans in itself, who work for no body else. And yet among the variety of convenient, and, I may add, elegant furniture with

* Some of our Parisian witlings will no doubt exclaim at this, as well as at several other passages, and attempt to demonstrate to the ladies (for it is to the ladies particularly that these gentlemen undertake to demonstrate) that it is impossible for a wooden house to keep out the cold. What a lying author is this ? they will say, what a blunderer in natural philosophy ! — Their demonstration I shall not pretend to controvert : but this I know, that the Swiss are kept very warm in their wooden houses, and that even in the depth of winter, when the country is covered with frost and snow.

which

which their houses are furnished, every thing is constructed and finished in a masterly manner. They have leisure also to invent and make many different implements in steel, wood and paste-board, which they dispose of to foreigners, and export even to Paris; particularly those little wooden clocks, which have been made by them, and have been sent into different parts of Europe for some few years past. They construct others also of iron, and even carry their ingenuity so far as to make watches; but what appears almost incredible, is, that every workman is himself capable of the several branches, into which this business is usually divided; and fabricates all the different tools himself.

Nor is this all. They are possessed of useful books, are tolerably instructed in them, and reason sensibly on most subjects *. They make cranes, magnets, spectacles, pumps, weather-glasses, and camera-obscuras. Their apartments are hung round with various kinds of instruments; so that you would take the stove of a peasant for the workshop of a mechanick, or for the cabinet of some experimentalist. They all know something also of drawing, painting, and arithmetick. Most of them play on the flute, and many know a little of musick, and sing justly. These arts are not taught them by professed masters, but are handed down as it were by tradition. Of those whom I knew acquainted with musick, one of them told me

* I might cite, as an example, a man of merit well known in Paris, and more than once honoured with the suffrage of the academy of sciences. This is Mr. Rivaz, a celebrated Valesian. I know indeed that he has few equals among his countrymen; but this I know that it was in living like them, that he learned to excell them.

he had learned it of his father; another of his aunt, and a third of his cousin; while others did not remember of whom. One of their most common amusements, is to sing psalms in four parts, with their wives and children; when one is astonished to hear from their rustic habitations the nervous and manly harmony of Goudimel, so long since forgotten by our scientific artists.

I could be no more weary of rambling among those delightful villas, than were the honest inhabitants of treating me with frankness and hospitality. Unfortunately I was then but young; my curiosity was only that of a child, and I sought of course more to amuse than instruct myself.

Thirty years having since elapsed, the few observations I then made have slipped my memory. I remember only that I constantly admired in those extraordinary people, a certain mixture of artifice and simplicity, which one would think incompatible, and which I have never observed in any other. But I remember nothing in particular of their manners, society or character. At present I should regard this happy spot with a different eye; and yet may never see it more; though alas! it is in the way to my native country!

Having given this slight sketch of the nature and situation of the place, we will suppose that a theatre was erected at a small expence on the top of the mountain, and in the midst of the habitations, we have been speaking of; with the view of affording a decent entertainment for a people, constantly employed and able to support the expence: let us suppose farther, that these people should contract a liking for
such

such entertainment ; and then let us enquire what would be the result of such an institution. The first inconvenience that presents itself, is that the occupation of these people ceasing to be their amusement, as soon as they have got another, they will be disgusted with the former : hence their industry will not furnish them with their former leisure, nor with the same inventions. Besides there will be every day so much time lost by all those who go to the play ; who will hardly return immediately to their work with their heads full of what they have been seeing at the theatre ; and of which they will continue to talk and ruminate. Hence will arise a decrease of labour, the first ill consequence.

However little they pay at entrance, it must still be something. Here is an expence they have not been at before. They must pay also for their wives and children, when they take them thither, as of course they sometimes will. Add to this, that a man cannot go to a public assembly in his working dress : he will hence be obliged to put on his Sunday clothes, to change his linen, and to be shaved and powdered more frequently : all which will cost him both money and time. Here we have an increase of expences ; the second ill consequence.

An additional expence and diminished labour must have some means of indemnification. This will be found only in the price of labour, which of course will raise the price of their commodities. The traders, disgusted at this rise, will leave these *mountaineers* *, and provide them-

* So the inhabitants of the abovementioned mountain are called.

selves with the like commodities from their neighbours, who without being grown less industrious, should have no theatre, and therefore would not have the same reason to raise the price of their goods. Hence decrease of trade, a third ill consequence.

In bad weather the roads are impassable; but the comedians must live in all weathers, their representation therefore must not be interrupted. The playhouse must of course then be accessible at all seasons. In the winter, roads must be opened through the snow; possibly they will be paved, and God forgive us, perhaps lighted. Here arises a public expence; and consequently there must be a tax laid upon individuals to discharge it. Hence the establishment of taxes, a fourth ill consequence.

The wives of our mountaineers, going first to see and afterwards to be seen, must be dressed out, and that with marks of distinction. The Squire's lady will not be seen at a play, in the same attire as the wife of a schoolmaster; while the latter will endeavour to make as good an appearance as the former. Hence will soon arise an emulation in dress, which will ruin their husbands, and perhaps infect them with the same spirit; while every expedient will be thought of to evade the restraint of sumptuary laws. Hence the introduction of luxury, a fifth ill consequence.

What follows is easy to be conceived; without placing to account, therefore, the other inconveniencies which I already have, or hereafter shall mention; without examining into the nature of theatrical entertainments or the morality of their effects; I confine myself entirely
to

to the articles of labour and profit : and I conceive I have proved, by a simple deduction of consequences, how a people, who live easy and happy, while they owe that ease and happiness to their industry, hasten their own destruction when they exchange reality for appearance, and precipitate themselves into luxury.

By the way, you are not to object that my supposition is chimerical. I lay it down as such, endeavouring only to render its inevitable consequences more or less perceptible. A few circumstances excepted, there are other mountaineers, besides those I have described, and the example is, *mutatis mutandis*, very generally applicable.

Thus, were it even true that theatrical entertainments are not bad in themselves, we are yet to enquire whether they may not become so, with regard to any particular people for whom they are intended. In some places they may be useful to attract foreigners ; to increase the circulation of specie ; to afford encouragement to artists ; to diversify modes of dress ; to amuse the rich or those who aspire to become so ; to render them less hurtful to society ; to divert the poorer sort from thinking on their misery ; to make them forget the demerit of their chiefs by attending to that of dancers ; to maintain a kind of taste, when real virtue is no more ; to hide the deformity of vice with the varnish of decorum ; and in a word, to prevent a corruption of manners from degenerating into flagrant licentiousness. In other places, however, they would tend to suppress the love of labour ; to discourage industry ; to ruin individuals ; to infect them with idleness ; to set them looking out for means of subsistence without working ; to
render

render the common people indolent and mean; to divert their attention from those public and private concerns which ought to employ their thoughts; to turn prudence into ridicule; to substitute a theatrical jargon in the place of virtue; to place all their morality in metaphysics; to convert sober citizens into rattling wits, their modest wives into fine ladies, and their daughters into amorous coquettes. The general effect would be the same on all men; but men thus perverted would be more or less proper for their situation and country. In becoming equal, the bad would be gainers; but the good would be still greater losers: both of them would contract a taste for indolence and effeminacy; which would deprive the one of great virtues, and preserve the other from attempting great crimes.

From these new reflections we may infer a consequence directly contrary to that which I drew from the former; viz. that when a people are corrupted, playhouses are good for them; and that when the people are uncorrupted, playhouses are bad. It should seem, therefore, that these two contrary effects counteracting each other, dramatic entertainments should be found indifferent to all. But there is this difference, that the effect which enforces both the good and the evil, is deduced from the spirit and tendency of the particular performance itself; it is subject, like them, to a thousand modifications that reduce it in a manner to nothing; whereas that effect which converts the good into evil, and the evil into good, results from the very institution itself; and is a constant and real effect, which is daily renewed, and must in the end prevail.

It follows hence that, in order to judge whether it be proper or not to establish a theatre in any place, it is first of all necessary to know, whether the inhabitants of it, are virtuous or vicious in their manners; a question it by no means becomes me to decide, in respect to my fellow-citizens. Be this however as it may, all the concession I am able to make on this head, is that a playhouse will do us no kind of harm, if we are already so far gone that nothing else will.

To prevent the inconveniencies that might arise from the example of the comedians, you would compel them to be honest people. By this means, you say, we should have theatrical entertainments and virtuous manners; and be able to unite the advantages of both. Theatrical entertainments and virtuous manners! This would indeed be a sight, especially as it would be the first time it had ever been seen! But what are the means you point out, for keeping the players in due bounds? Severe laws well executed. This is at least a confession that they stand in need of restraint, and that the method is not easy. Severe laws! Our very first law is to admit of no such people. If we should once break through that, what will avail the severity of others? Laws well executed! say you? It is first necessary to know if such laws could be so; for the force of the laws hath its bounds as well as the vices they are intended to restrain. We cannot be certain of executing the laws, till we have compared these two quantities and find that the former exceeds the latter. The knowledge of these two relations constitutes the real science

science of the legislator ; for, if he had nothing more to do than to publish edicts upon edicts and regulations upon regulations, in order to remedy abuses as fast as they rise, he might doubtless compose many fine pieces ; but they would, for the most part, remain ineffectual, and would serve rather as indications of what ought to be done, than as the means of putting it in execution. In reality, the institution of laws is not so wonderful an enterprize, but that almost any man, of common sense and common honesty, might prescribe such institutions as properly observed would be of the greatest benefit to society. Shew me any under-graduate of a civilian, who cannot draw up a code as morally pure as that of Plato's imaginary Republick. But this is not the only point to be aimed at. The main business is to adapt this code in such a manner to the people for whom it is framed, and to the particular injunctions therein contained, that the execution of it should be the natural result of its institution. This would be imposing laws on a people, after the example of Solon, not indeed such laws as might be absolutely best in themselves, but such as are relatively best adapted to a people in their particular circumstances. It is, otherwise, much better that disorders should continue, than be provided against by laws, which are not to be observed ; for this, without removing the evil, is the way to bring the law itself into contempt.

Another observation not less important, is, that affairs of morals and equity in general, are not regulated like those of particular justice and strict right, by laws and edicts : or, if the laws have at any times an influence on manners, it is when they themselves first derive that influence

fluence in a great measure from them : in which case they return it, by a kind of reaction well known to real politicians. The first act of authority done by the Ephori of Sparta, on entering upon the office, was to issue a proclamation to enjoin the people not merely to observe the laws, but to love them ; in order that their observance might be esteemed no hardship. This proclamation, which was not a matter of form, perfectly shewed the spirit of the Spartan institution ; by which a regard to the laws and to manners were intimately connected in the minds of the citizens. But let us not flatter ourselves with ever seeing Sparta revive in the midst of commerce and a love of gain. Had we the same maxims indeed as the Lacedemonians, a playhouse might be very safely erected at Geneva ; for none of its citizens would resort thither.

By what means then can government have an influence on manners ? I answer by public opinion. If our habits arise from our own sentiments, when we live in retirement ; they arise from the sentiments of others, when we mix in society. When we live not by ourselves, but chiefly with others, it is by the opinion of others that we are governed. Nothing appears salutary or eligible to individuals but what is adjudged so by the publick ; the only happiness which is known to the greater part of mankind being that of being thought happy.

With respect to the choice of necessary means to direct the public opinion ; this is another question, which it would be superfluous to resolve for you, and this is not the place in which to resolve it for my readers in general. I shall content myself, therefore, with shewing, by a
very

very striking instance, that such means are neither laws nor penalties, nor indeed any kind of compulsive methods. There is an example just under your eye; for I borrow it from your own country; I mean the tribunal of the marshals of France, who are appointed supreme judges of the point of honour.

What was the intent of this institution? To change the public opinion in respect to duels; to the reparation of injuries and to those occasions in which a brave man is obliged, on pain of infamy, to demand satisfaction by his sword.

It follows hence, in the *first* place, that compulsion having no power over the judgment, the greatest care should be taken to banish every the least appearance of violence from a tribunal instituted to effect such a change. Even the term *tribunal* was an improper one; that of the *court of honour* would, I think, have been much better. Its only arms ought to be honour and infamy: there should be no pecuniary rewards, no corporal punishment, no prisons, no arrests, no guards belonging to it. A beadle should cite the accused to appear, by simply touching him with a white wand; without any other constraint to force an appearance. Not to appear indeed before the judges within a certain time after citation, should be taken as a confession that the person cited had no honour, and of course should incur their condemnation. Hence should result proper marks of infamy, such as a degradation from nobility, an incapacity to serve the king in any office civil or military, with other punishments of the same kind, which naturally depend on, and take their rise from opinion.

It follows, secondly, that, in order to eradicate public prepossession, there should be appointed judges of great influence and authority respecting the matter in question: and as to this particular, it is certain the founder entered properly into the spirit of the institution: for in a military nation none can be better judges of the proper occasions for shewing courage, or of demanding satisfaction for insulted honour, than veterans rewarded by military titles, grown grey beneath their laurels, and who have so often shewn, at the expence of their blood, that they are not ignorant when their duty requires it to be shed.

It follows, in the third place, that, as nothing is more independent on the supreme power than public opinion, the sovereign ought to be careful, above all things, not to suffer his arbitrary decisions to interfere with the decrees passed to represent, or to direct, that opinion. On the contrary, he ought to endeavour to raise the court of honour above his throne; as being himself subject to its venerable decrees. He should not have begun, therefore, with the condemnation of all duels indiscriminately. This was setting up a shocking opposition at once between honour and the law; for not the law itself can oblige any one to be guilty of his own dishonour. If the publick are of opinion that any particular man is a poltroon or a coward, it will be in vain for the King, with all his authority, to declare him brave. Nobody will believe a word of it: and such a man who, being generally despised as a coward, should thus want to be respected on compulsion, would only be thought the more contemptible. As to what is said in the edicts, that duels are offences

fences against the Deity; this is doubtless a very pious opinion: but the civil magistrate is no judge of spiritual concerns; whereas, whenever the sovereign authority offers to interpose in disputes between honour and religion, it runs in danger of exposing itself on both sides. Nor do these edicts reason a jot better, when they say that, instead of fighting, the parties aggrieved should address themselves to the marshals: for to condemn thus all duels without distinction or reserve, is to begin with previously determining what is referred to their judgment. It is well known the marshals are not authorized to allow of a duel, even in cases where offended honour has no other means of satisfaction; and, according to the prejudices of the world, many such cases may happen: for as to the mere ceremonious satisfaction offered to the person injured, this is only child's play.

We will suppose a man hath a right to accept of such reparation on his own account, and to forgive his enemy on submission: an artful management of this maxim might insensibly prevail over the barbarous prejudices it opposes. But the case is different when the honour of others is attacked, with whom he is connected; here is no possibility of accommodation. If my father has received a box on the ear; if my sister, my wife, or my mistress be insulted, shall I preserve my own honour by prostituting theirs? No marshals, no accommodations will suffice: I must either avenge my friends or be myself dishonoured; the edicts leave no other choice, but punishment or infamy. To cite an example that makes for my present pur-

pose; is it not a singular kind of contrast between the spirit of our theatres and that of our courts of justice, that the same people should applaud that very Cid on the stage, who would be hanged at the Greve?

We may do what we please, but till some expedient be found to change the public opinion, neither reason, nor virtue, nor the laws will prevail over it. Compulsion, I say again, will not do; nor would the method at present prescribed be of any other use, were it practised, than to punish brave men, and encourage cowards: but fortunately it is too absurd to be used, and hath served only to change the name of duels. What then, you will say, should have been done? It appears to me, that single combats ought to have been cognizable to the jurisdiction of the marshals; who should have judged of the case, and prevented, or even have permitted them as they found cause. The marshals should not only have been invested with authority to grant the liberty of fighting, when they judged it expedient; but it would have been of consequence for them to have made actual use of this authority; were it for no other reason than to obviate a common notion, which is not easy to suppress, and alone subverts their whole authority, viz. that in matters which come before their court, they determine less according to their own opinion, than according to the orders of the sovereign. But then there would be no scandal in demanding leave to fight on a necessary occasion: nor would there be any shame in declining to fight, when the reasons for granting leave were deemed insufficient. It would be always, however,
a shame

a shame to say to them, "I have been insulted, pray contrive some method to excuse me from fighting." By such means all private challenges would infallibly be discountenanced; when, offended honour being at liberty to defend itself and courage to display itself in the field of honour, those persons would be justly suspected of bad designs who fought in private: and when those whom the Court of honour had judged to have fought wrongfully * should be tried as assassins by the ordinary courts of justice. I own that, as many duels would not be adjudged till too late, and others would be solemnly permitted, this institution would be attended, in the beginning, with the loss of many brave men; but it would conduce afterward, to the saving a prodigious number of lives: whereas, from the effusion of the blood spilt in defiance of the king's edicts, there arises a motive for spilling still more.

To proceed to the consequences afterwards: In proportion as the Court of honour, by its prudential decisions, should acquire an influence over popular opinions, it would grow by degrees more severe, till the just occasions for fighting were reduced to none at all: in which case the point of honour would be altered in its principles, and duels would be entirely abolished. So much trouble hath not been taken indeed; and the consequence is, the present

* I say *wrongfully*, by which I mean not only unfairly or cowardly, but also unjustly, and without sufficient reason; which would be justly presumed of every affair that should not be brought before the court.

institutions to this end are useless. If duels are not so frequent in our days; it is not that they are either despised or punished: but because there hath been a revolution of manners †; at the same time, it is a strong proof that this revolution arises from quite different causes, in which the government has no concern; and that the public opinion is by no means changed respecting this article; for, after all these ill-judged precautions, a gentleman who is insulted, and does not demand satisfaction at the point of his sword, is still as infamous as ever.

A fourth consequence of the same institution is, that, as no gentleman can pass through life without honour, all ranks of people that wear a sword, even from the prince to the foot-soldier, and even all who do not wear swords, should be subject to the jurisdiction of this court: some to account for their conduct and behaviour, others of their principles and conversation: all being equally liable to be honoured or disgraced, according as their lives and

† People used formerly to quarrel in the public taverns: they have now taken a disgust at this coarse and vulgar pleasure, by finding a more easy access to private families. Formerly the men would cut one another's throat for a mistress: they have since discovered, by living in greater familiarity with the sex, that it is not worth while to fight about them. If we except women and wine, there are few subjects for quarrel. At present few people fight about any thing but gaming. The gentlemen of the army fight for court favours, or to prevent their quitting the service. In this age of calculation, every man may estimate the value of his honour and life within half a crown.

opinions should be agreeable or disagreeable to the principles of national honour; which would be thus insensibly reformed by the tribunal in question conformably to those of reason and justice. To confine the jurisdiction of such courts to the nobility and gentlemen of the army, is to lop off the branches and leave the trunk: for, if the point of honour makes gentlemen act, it makes the people talk: the former fight only because the latter would condemn them if they did not: now, to change those actions which have the public esteem for their object, it is first necessary to effect a change in the judgment of the public concerning them. I am convinced indeed, that this change will never be effected without consulting even the women, on whom depends in a great measure the mode of thinking among the men.

It follows also from this principle, that the tribunal we are speaking of, should be more or less formidable to different orders of men, in proportion as they have more or less honour to lose according to the general notions of the world; for by these must we in this case ever be governed. If the institution were properly founded, princes and peers would tremble at the name of a court of honour. On the first erecting of this tribunal, all the private quarrels subsisting among the nobility of the kingdom should be referred to its decision; the judges passing sentence as far as possible agreeable to the laws of honour only. These sentences should be severe; such as cessions of rank and precedence, and those personal, and independent of the privilege of place. There should be issued prohibitions to wear arms, to appear in the presence of the prince, or some

such penalties as are nothing in reality but only imaginary punishments, even down to actual infamy; which might be looked upon as the capital punishment of this court of honour. All these penalties should have the same effect, by the concurrence of the supreme authority, as the public judgment hath when its determinations are not counteracted by force.

The court should not take cognizance of trifles, nor ever do things imperfectly: even the king himself should have been summoned before it, when he threw his cane out of the window, for fear, as he said, of being provoked to strike a gentleman*. Both parties should have been cited to appear in court; the king should have been solemnly tried, and sentenced to make the gentleman reparation for the affront indirectly offered him: at the same time, the court should award an honourable prize to the Monarch, for having moderated his passion. This prize should be something simple, but conspicuous, for the king to wear during life; which would, in my opinion, be a more honourable mark of distinction than any attached to royalty, and would, doubtless, be a frequent subject for the muse.

It is certain that, with respect to honour, kings themselves are particularly subjected to public judgment, and consequently may, without debasing themselves, appear before the court that represents it. Lewis the XIV. was a proper person to have formed an institution of this kind, and I believe would have done it, had it been suggested to him.

* Mr. de Lauzun. Here I think the cane was nobly applied.

And

And yet with all these precautions, it is still doubtful whether such an establishment would succeed, because it is contrary to the spirit of the monarchical government. Certain it is, nevertheless, that by neglecting some such means, and by attempting to introduce legal compulsion in matters of prejudice; and to alter the public notions of honour by violence, the royal authority hath been frequently endangered, and the laws rendered contemptible for attempting to exceed their power. What was the opinion, however, which they wanted to destroy? Certainly the most extravagant and barbarous opinion that ever entered the human mind; viz. that every social duty is supported by courage; that no man is a knave, a scoundrel, or a calumniator, but on the contrary, every one polite, humane and honest, that dares to fight; that falsehood is converted into truth, robbery rendered lawful, treachery commendable, and all kinds of villainy honourable, when they can be defended by the sword; that an injury is sufficiently repaired by a thrust through the lungs, and that we are never in the wrong in our quarrels with others, provided we fight and kill them. I confess there is another species of fighting, wherein cruelty is mixed with politeness; this is when people fight in the first heat of blood. In the first heat of blood! Good God! Why, thou savage beast, dost thou thirst after another's blood? Wouldst thou drink it? It is impossible to reflect on these horrid circumstances without shuddering. Such are the prejudices which the kings of France, armed with all the public force, have attacked in vain. Opinion, the queen of the

world, is not subject to the power of kings; who are themselves the first of slaves.

But I finish here this long digression; which unfortunately will not be the last: and from this example, perhaps too brilliant, *si parva licet componere magnis*, I return to more simple applications. One of the infallible effects of a theatre established in such a small city as ours, would be to change our maxims, or, if you will, our public prejudices and opinions: this would effect a necessary change in our manners, whether for the better or worse I pretend not to say, but certainly less agreeable to our constitution. I ask, Sir, by what laws you would effectually remedy this inconvenience? If government hath a great influence on manners, it is only by means of its primitive institution: when it hath once formed those manners, it has no longer the power to alter them, unless it alters itself: on the contrary, it hath even a great deal of trouble to preserve them against the inevitable accidents, by which they are constantly attacked, and against their natural propensity to change. Public opinions, altho' so difficult to be influenced, are yet in themselves of a very unstable and changeable nature. A thousand fortuitous causes and unforeseen circumstances, will effect what neither argument nor force are capable of; or rather it is precisely because they are directed by chance, that compulsion hath no influence on them: just as in throwing dice, throw the box with what force you will, it will not in the least contribute to turn up the cast required.

The utmost that human wisdom is capable of, is to prevent alterations; and to put a check

by way of prevention, to whatever tends that way; but we no sooner permit such changes than we authorize them, and are seldom able to determine their effects, nor can ever answer for what they will be. How shall we prevent those effects, therefore, whose cause we have introduced voluntarily? Would you propose that we should establish censors in imitation of the institution just mentioned? We have those already; and, if all the influence of this tribunal is found but barely sufficient to keep us just what we are; how little would it be able to oppose a new and additional motive to depravation of manners? It is evident that it would be insufficient. The first mark of its impotence to prevent the abuses of a theatre, would be its permitting one to be established. For it is easy to foresee that these two different establishments cannot subsist long together, the stage would either turn the censors into ridicule, or the censors would banish the comedians.

But the matter in debate, regards not only the insufficiency of laws for restraining corrupt manners, while their cause is left subsisting. I foresee it will be remarked that, my head being so full of the abuses necessarily arising from play-houses, and with the general impossibility of preventing them, I have not made a direct answer to the expedient proposed; which was to have a set of comedians all worthy people, that is to say, our comedians should be made such. It is not very necessary to enter into a particular discussion of this circumstance: what I have already said of the effects of comedy, being independent of the manners of the comedians,

medians, the objection against this kind of entertainment is still the same; were the players themselves even to profit as much as you can suppose by the injunctions laid on them; nay, were they even to become exemplary patterns of virtue. My regard, however, for those of my countrymen, who see no other danger arising from a play-house, than the bad example of the comedians, leads us farther to enquire whether; even on their supposition, this expedient hath any probability of success; and whether it ought to satisfy them.

To begin with facts, before we reason on their causes; I find, in general, that the profession of a comedian is a state of immorality and licentiousness; that the players of both sexes lead debauched and scandalous lives; that they are at once prodigal and avaricious; constantly involved in debt and extravagance; careless in spending their money, and little scrupulous as to their manner of getting it. I find also, that in all countries their profession is disreputable; that those who follow it*, whether excommunicated or not, are universally despised; and that even at Paris, where they are less contemned, and in general behave better than elsewhere, a reputable tradesman would be

* If the English interred the celebrated Mrs. Oldfield, by the side of their kings, it was not her profession, but her talents, they designed to honour. In England, great parts ennoble the meanest station; and the want of them debases the highest. With respect also to comedians in particular, the lower and middling order of them, are held in as much contempt, or perhaps more, at London than in any other part of the world.

ashamed to keep company with those very players, who are seen daily at the tables of the Great. Another observation equally important is, that the public contempt for players prevails most in places most remarkable for purity of manners; there being some countries of singular innocence and simplicity, in which the profession of a comedian is almost held in detestation. These are undoubted facts. You will say, perhaps, they are owing to prejudice. I grant it: but, as this prejudice is general, we must enquire after the general cause of it: and I do not think we shall find it arise from any thing except the profession itself. To this you answer, that the comedians are induced to render themselves contemptible, because their profession is so generally despised: but wherefore should their profession have been despised, if it had not been deserving of it? Why should people have a worse opinion of actors than of men of other professions, if there were nothing to distinguish them? It is perhaps this particular we ought to examine into, before we attempt to justify them at the expence of the publick.

I might possibly have imputed this prejudice to the declamations of our priests, if I had not found it prevalent among the Romans before the birth of Christianity; and that not only current in the minds of the common people, but authorized by express laws, which declared players to be infamous, deprived them of the title and privileges of Roman citizens; and set the actresses on the footing of common prostitutes. Here we find no reason for the prejudice, but what must arise from the very nature of the thing. The priests and devotees among
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the Pagans rather approved than condemned theatrical exhibitions; which constituted a part of the diversions consecrated to religion*: they were not interested to decry them, neither, in fact, did they do it. At that time, however, people might as justly exclaim as you do now, of the absurdity of holding a set of people in contempt, who were paid and protected by the publick. But this circumstance does not appear to me so absurd as it may to you: for it is sometimes proper that a government should permit dishonourable, if useful, professions; and yet, the professors themselves shall not have the more right to be respected on that account.

I have somewhere read, that this contempt was not cast on real comedians, but on the *histriones*, or actors of interludes and farces, who polluted their exhibitions with buffoonry and obscenity: but we cannot surely admit of this distinction; the words *comædus* and *histrion* being perfectly synonymous, and no otherwise different than as one was Greek, and the other Etruscan. Cicero, in his tract *de Oratore*, gives the appellation of *histriones* to the two greatest actors that ever were known in Rome, Roscius and Æsopus; and, in his oration in behalf of the former, he laments that so worthy a man should follow so mean a profession. At the same time, the law was so far from distinguishing between players and actors of interludes and farces, or between tragedians and comedians, that it stamped the same mark of infamy in-

* We are told by Livy, that the *Ludi scenici* were introduced at Rome, in the year 390, in order to mitigate the plague. At present, the theatres would be shut up on a like occasion.

discriminately on all those who trod the stage. *Quisquis in scenam prodierit, ait prætor, infamis est.* Certain it is, that this infamy did not relate so much to the representation itself, as to the state and condition of those who made a trade of it: for the Roman youth acted publicly, at the end of the great pieces, the *Atellanæ* or *Exodia* without any dishonour.

If we except this particular instance, we shall find, on many occasions, that the comedians indiscriminately were all slaves, and were treated as such when the publick were dissatisfied with them. I know of but one people, who thought differently on this subject from all other nations; and these were the Greeks. It is certain, that in Greece the profession of a player was far from being infamous; there being many instances of comedians employed in public affairs, both at home and abroad. The reasons of this exception are obvious. In the first place, tragedy as well as comedy being of Grecian invention, the Greeks could not directly throw a mark of contempt on a profession, of whose effects they were as yet ignorant: and when these effects came to be once known, the public opinion was already formed concerning it. 2dly. As there was something sacred in the origin of tragedy, those who performed in this sort of drama, were looked upon rather in the light of priests than players. 3dly. The subject of their dramas being taken from their own antiquities, with which this nation was extravagantly delighted, they regarded the actors, not as men representing fabulous exhibitions, but as ingenious citizens, instructing the people in the history of their country by means of such representations. 4thly. The
Greeks

Greeks were such enthusiasts for liberty, as to look upon themselves as the only people nature intended to be free: feeling a rapturous pleasure in recalling to mind the misfortunes of ancient times, and the criminal oppressions of their former masters. As they reaped a constant instruction from these exhibitions, they could not forbear shewing some respect to the instruments of such instruction. 5thly. As tragedy, at its commencement, was acted by none but men, there was no such scandalous admixture of men and women as now appears on the stage, and converts our theatres into schools of immorality. 6thly. Their public entertainments had nothing of the mercenary meanness of ours. Their theatres were not erected merely to serve the purposes of venality and avarice: they were not inclosed in dark dungeons; nor had the actors any need to lay the spectators under contribution, or to count the number of people in the house for fear of losing a dinner.

Their grand and superb entertainments were exhibited in the open air, in the presence of a whole people; presenting to view combats, victories and prizes, objects capable of inspiring the Greeks with an ardent emulation, and firing their hearts with sentiments of glory and honour. It was in the midst of this grand solemnity, so proper to elevate and move the soul, that the players, animated with the same zeal, frequently shared with the principal personages of the nation, the honours assigned to the victors at the public games. It is not surprising therefore, that their profession, thus exercised, should be so far from reflecting dishonour on them, that it should inspire them with that
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undaunted courage and noble disinterestedness, by which the actor seemed frequently to be raised to the dignity of the character represented. But after all, if we except Sparta, Greece was never yet cited as an example of good morals: and as Sparta would not admit of a theatre, it certainly could pay but little regard to the profession of a player.

To return however, to the Romans, who were so far from imitating the Greeks in this respect, that they set a quite contrary example. It was not with a view to disgrace the profession, that they declared comedians to be infamous by law. Of what use indeed could have been so cruel a decree? No, they did not cast any dishonour on the profession; they only gave an open and avowed testimony of the dishonour attached to it: for laws never alter the nature of things; on the contrary, they are guided by it; at least such laws only are observed. The point, therefore, is not to exclaim against prejudices; but to enquire whether opinions that are supposed to be prejudices really are such; and whether the profession of a comedian is not dishonourable in itself. For, if it should unfortunately prove so, it would be in vain for us to determine the contrary; as instead of vindicating its reputation, we should only bring disgrace on ourselves.

What then is the so highly boasted talent of a comedian? It is the art of dissimulation, of assuming a foreign character, and of appearing different to what he really is; of flying into a passion without cause, and of saying what he does not think as naturally as if he really did; in a word, of forgetting himself to personate others.

others. What is the profession of a comedian? A trade, in which a man publickly exhibits himself with a mercenary design; a trade, in which he submits to insults and affronts from people, who think they purchase a right to offer them when they please; a trade, in short, by which he exposes his person, carriage and demeanour to public sale. I appeal to every ingenuous mind, whether he does not think this traffick hath something in it extremely base and servile. Tell me, ye philosophers, who affect to be above all vulgar prejudices, could you support the shame of being meanly metamorphosed into kings, and obliged to play a part so different from your own; exposing your majestical personages to the rude shouts of the populace? What kind of spirit, then, is it in reality that a comedian imbibes from his profession? A mixture of meanness, falsehood, and ridiculous pride, which fits him for acting every kind of character, except the noblest of all, that of man, which he throws aside.

I am not to learn that the profession of a comedian is not like that of a cheat, who endeavours to impose on you: he does not indeed pretend that you should take him for the person represented, or that you should suppose him really actuated by the passions whose appearance he imitates. I am sensible, also, that in giving this imitation for what it really is, he renders it perfectly innocent. I do not directly charge him, therefore, with being an impostor, but with his making it the business of his life to cultivate the arts of deception, and with acquiring habits, that, however innocent they may be on the stage, must every where else be

be subservient to vice. Will these fellows, so gaily dressed, and so well practised in gallantry, never make use of their arts to seduce young females? Will those cunning valets, who display such a volubility of tongue and dexterity of hand on the stage, never exert those abilities elsewhere? Will they never take a purse from an extravagant son, or an avaricious father for that of Leander or Argan? It will be found throughout the world, that the temptation of doing ill, increases with the facility of executing it; so that it is necessary comedians should be more virtuous than other men, if they are not more corrupt.

It may be objected to this, that the orator and preacher expose their persons in public as well as the comedian. But there is a very great difference between them. When the orator displays himself, it is to plead in somebody's behalf, and not exhibit himself as a shew. He represents no fictitious character, but plays his own proper part, and speaks in his own name. He says, or at least ought to say, no more than he really thinks. The man and the character being one and the same, he is in his own place, and in the case of every other citizen who discharges the duties of his station. But a comedian on the stage, displaying only the sentiments of others, says nothing but what he is directed; frequently representing even an imaginary Being; so that the man is lost, as it were, in the hero; and in this state of oblivion, if any vestige of him is discoverable, it is only to be made the jest of the spectators. What shall I say of those, who seem afraid of appearing too respectable in their own persons, and therefore debase themselves so far as to act
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in characters, which they would be very sorry really to resemble? It is undoubtedly a melancholy circumstance to see such a number of bad men in the world, pass for honest people; but can any thing be more base and odious than to see an honest comedian act the part of a villain, and displaying all his art to inculcate such criminal maxims, as in his heart he abhors.

If by all this, there is not discovered something dishonourable in the profession itself, there is at least another source of corruption to be discovered in the licentious manners of the actresses; which necessarily occasions the same immorality in the actors. Yet why, you will say, should such immorality be unavoidable? Ah! why indeed! At any other time, there would be no room for asking this question; but in the present age, when prejudice and error prevail under the specious name of philosophy, we see mankind, intoxicated by frothy science, are grown deaf to the voice of reason, and the dictates of nature.

In every state, country, and condition of life, there is so powerful and so natural a connection subsisting between the two sexes, that the manners of the one always determine those of the other. Not that these manners are constantly the same in both, but they have ever the same degree of goodness, though differently modified in each sex by its particular inclinations. The English women are mild and timid; Englishmen are hardy and bold. Whence arises this apparent opposition? It is because the character of each sex is thus heightened; and it is natural for this nation to carry every thing to extremes. In every thing else, the men and
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women in England greatly resemble each other. Both sexes chuse to live asunder; they are both fond of good cheer; both retire after dinner, the men to their bottle, the women to their tea: both sit down to cards with calmness and indifference, making play rather an occupation than a passion: both have a great regard to decorum; both do honour to the marriage vow, or if ever they happen to violate their fidelity, they are far from boasting of that violation: they are both fond of domestic peace; both are fond of taciturnity; both difficult to be affected; but when affected agitated to extremes: the passion of love is in both terrible and fatal; it frequently determines the fate of their lives: the consequence, says Muralt, is nothing less than the loss of reason or of life: lastly, both sexes are fond of the country; the English ladies taking as much pleasure in wandering up and down their solitary parks as in shewing themselves at Vauxhall.

From this taste for solitude arises that for contemplation, and the reading of romances; with which * England abounds. Thus both sexes, more collected within themselves, indulge themselves less in following frivolous fashions, and have a greater relish for the real pleasures of life; studying less to appear happy than really to be so.

I have mentioned the English nation by way of preference to all nations in the world; be-

* These, like the people, are either sublime or contemptible. There never has been written a Romance, equal or any thing near to *Clarissa*, in any language whatever.

cause there is no people, among whom the manners of the two sexes seem to differ more at first sight. From the relation then subsisting between the manners of the men and women of that country, we may draw inferences respecting those of every other. The difference consists solely in this, that the lives of the females constantly shew their manners: whereas those of the men, being engaged in the uniformity of business, one cannot form any true judgment of them without observing them in their pleasures. To know the men, therefore, we must study the women. This is indeed an universal maxim, in which all the world will agree with me. But if to this I should add, that female virtues never display themselves but in a life of retirement; that the peculiar province of women is the peaceful management of their families; that their dignity consists in modesty; that bashfulness is in them inseparable from chastity; that to court the looks of the men is a mark of corruption; and that every woman dishonours herself who is fond of appearing in public; I should instantly raise against me the cry of that new philosophy, which hath its rise and declension in the midst of great cities, and attempts to suppress the voice of nature and of mankind.

These are all vulgar errors! would be the cry; childish notions! mere prejudices of education! Modesty is nothing; a mere invention of the social laws to secure the prerogatives of fathers and husbands, and to preserve some order in families. Why should we blush at the wants excited in us by nature? Why should we find any motive of shame, in an action so indiffe-
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rent in itself, and so useful in its effects as that which contributes to the perpetuation of our species? The desires being equal on both sides, why should there be any difference in discovering them? Why should one sex be less willing than the other to indulge itself in gratifying inclinations common to both? Why should man have any other laws in this respect than the brutes?

Tes pourquoi, dit le Dieu, ne finiroient jamais.

But it is not to man, but to his Creator these questions should be proposed. It were ridiculous to oblige me to give a reason for my being ashamed of a natural sensation, when the shame is as natural and as inherent as the sensation itself. You might as well ask, how I came by that very sensation. Am I to account for the operations of nature? According to this way of arguing, they who know not why man exists, may take upon them of course to deny his existence.

It is much to be feared that these scrutinizers into the councils of the Almighty, have but very superficially canvassed his reasons. As to my part, who do not pique myself on knowing them, yet I think I see some that have escaped these profound enquirers. They may say what they please; but it is most certain that the shame or bashfulness, which induces animals to conceal the pleasures of love, hath some foundation in nature. It is the safe-guard with which nature hath furnished both sexes, in order to be their protection in a state of weakness and self-oblivion, when they lie entirely at the mercy of the first comer. Thus it co-

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vers their slumbers with the veil of night, that they may be less exposed to hostile insults during that time of darkness and obscurity: and thus it prompts every suffering animal to seek retirement and solitude, that it may die in peace, and out of the reach of attacks it can no longer resist.

As to the bashfulness of the fair sex in particular; what better arms could nature bestow on those, whom she formed to act in the defensive? Our desires are equal! This is saying nothing, unless there were on both sides an equal ability to gratify them. What would become of our species, if the order of attack and defence were changed? The assailant might chance to pitch on a time when it would be impossible to reap a victory; the assailed might be left at peace, when it would be necessary for him to yield to an attack, and might be incessantly honoured when he would be too weak to support it: in fine, the power and the will, being always at variance, love would be no longer the support, but the scourge and destruction of our species.

Were the two sexes equally formed for making and receiving advances, no solicitude or importunity could be kept up between them; the fire of love always languishing in listless liberty, would soon be extinguished; the most delightful of all human sensations would hardly affect the heart, and the intent of it by no means be answered. The apparent obstacle which seems to remove this object to a distance, is in reality what occasions it to draw near. When the desires are concealed under blushes, they grow only the more seductive; modesty serves only
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by restraint to inflame them. The fear, the reserve, the timid confession, the tender and artless delicacy of the bashful lover serve only the better to disclose what he thinks to conceal. These are the circumstances that enhance the value of favours, and even soften denials. True love possesses in fact what modesty only disputes with it. This admixture of weakness and modesty renders the passion more affecting: the less it obtains, the greater value it sets on what hath been granted, and thus enjoys at once as well what is denied it, as what it possesses.

It is asked, why that which is not shameful in a man should be thought so in a woman? Why should one sex regard that as criminal which the other thinks lawful? What questions! Just as if the consequences were on both sides equal! As if all the severe duties of a woman were not derived solely from the necessity of a child's having a father. But were these important considerations out of the question, we should still be able to make the same answer, and it would be always valid; it is the ordinance of nature, and it is criminal to suppress her voice. Man may be bold and forward; nature designed him to be so*: for one
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* We must distinguish, however, between this boldness and brutal insolence: for nothing can proceed from more opposite sensations, nor hath more contrary effects. I suppose a passion innocent and free, that receives no laws but from itself; a passion that presides over its own mysteries, and forms an union of persons as well as of hearts. Should a man insult the modesty of a woman, or

of the sexes must make a declaration. But a woman without modesty must be criminal and depraved ; because she suppresses a natural sensation, the proper characteristic of her sex.

use violence to a young and lovely object that hath no regard for him, his motive would not merit the name of love, but of brutal lust : it would betray a soul destitute of all delicacy and incapable of love or honour. The greatest value of the pleasures of love, depends on the heart which grants them ; thus a real lover would be miserable even in the possession of the beloved object, did he not imagine he was beloved again.

The man who would gratify his desires, without the consent of the person who raised those desires, must have the insolence and brutality of a satyr : but he who knows how to express his desires without giving offence, how to render them engaging and interesting, how to act in such a manner as to inspire, in the person he loves, an equal share of affection, how to subdue his passions before he attacks the object ; he, I say, who acts thus, may be truly said to display a manly boldness. It is not enough even to be beloved ; the inspiring the object with equal desires, confers no right to gratify them : the will must also be brought to consent. In vain doth the heart grant what is refused by the will. The man of honour, and the lover abstain from this favour even when it is in their power to obtain it. To extort a tacit consent is all the violence permitted in love. To read it in the fair one's looks, to see it in her air, notwithstanding a verbal declaration to the contrary. This is the lover's art. If then he arrive at the completion of his happiness, he is not guilty of brutality, but behaves with honour ; he offers no insult to modesty, but reveres and assists it : leaving it the honour to defend what it might perhaps have abandoned.

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Can any one dispute the reality of this sensation? Does not all the world bear striking testimony of it? A simple comparison between the sexes, is sufficient to prove its existence. Doth not nature adorn young females with features so mild and soft, that a glowing blush renders them still more engaging? Hath not nature formed their complexion more delicately, and given their skin a finer texture, in order to disclose this virgin blush with additional beauty? Hath not she formed them so fearful that they may fly from us, and at the same time so weak, that they may be forced to yield? Why hath she given them a heart more susceptible of pity; why made them less swift of foot, less robust of body; why given them less height of stature, and greater delicacy of muscles, unless she intended they should submit to man? Subject to the inconveniences of pregnancy, and to the pains of child-birth, could these require a diminution of strength? But to reduce them to this perilous state, it was necessary they should be so strong, as not to yield without their own consent; and so weak as to have always a pretext for yielding. This is exactly the situation in which nature hath placed them.

But let us pass from theory to experiment. If modesty were merely a prejudice of education, acquired only in society, it ought to be stronger where education is most polished and refined, and where the laws of society have received the greatest improvement: as it ought for the same reason to be weaker, where mankind have been least polished, and where they continue in a state nearer to that of nature.

Experience, however, proves the contrary*. In the mountains of Switzerland the women are remarkably bashful and timid; a single word puts them to the blush; they hardly dare look up in the presence of the men, or speak a word in their company. Whereas in great cities, bashfulness is thought mean and ignoble; it is the only thing a lady should be ashamed of; the honour of putting a modest man to the blush belonging only to women of the first breeding.

The argument taken from the example of the brutes, proves nothing: neither is it in fact true. Man is not a dog nor a wolf. Nothing more is required than the primary simple relations of society, to give a moral quality to our sensations; which could never be the case with brutes. Animals it is true have a heart; and they have passions; but the sacred image of virtue and of beauty never entered into any other heart than that of man.

But notwithstanding this, where do we learn that instinct doth not sometimes produce effects in brute animals, similar to those which shame produces in man? We see daily instances to the contrary. Do not I see some brutes conceal themselves on particular occasions, in order to remove out of sight a disgusting object: and afterwards, instead of running away, tak-

* Here I foresee an objection. Among the savages, it will be said, the women have no modesty, for they go naked. To this I answer, that among us, the women have less, for they go dressed. See the conclusion of this letter, relative to the maids of Sparta.

ing pains to hide even the appearance of it? Hath not this all the air of decency? At least so would such behaviour be accounted in man. In their amours they have all their little caprices, their compliances and refusals; all which appear designed and seem as if deduced from the maxim of provoking the passion by resistance. I have before me while I am now writing, an example that confirms what I say. Two young doves, in the happy season of their first loves, exhibit a picture very different from that lustful brutality, which our pretended naturalists impute to these creatures. The white turtle follows her beloved step by step, yet flies away from him as soon as he turns about. If he take no notice of her, she endeavours by gentle billings to excite him to play. If he retires, she pursues him; if he defends himself, she flies back a few paces and invites him on again: thus doth the innocence of nature manage the decoys and gentle resistances of love, with an art equal to that of the most finished coquette. Not the fickle Galatea herself could act the part better; and Virgil might have borrowed from a dove-house one of the most charming images he ever drew.

But could it ever be denied that a peculiar sense of shame is natural to the female sex, would it be the less true that their province in society ought to be that of retirement and domestic economy, and that they should be educated in principles adapted to that end? If the timidity and modesty, by which they are so amiably distinguished, are of human invention, it is of great importance to society that every woman should acquire and cultivate these qualities: and she who refuses or neglects to com-

ply with them, should accordingly be adjudged to act contrary to the rules of morality. Nature affords not a more engaging and delightful picture, than that of a mother surrounded by her family of children, regulating the several occupations of her domesticks; endeavouring to make her husband easy and happy in his situation, and directing the whole economy of her house with prudence. It is here that the discreet wife appears in her glory; it is here that she really commands respect, and that beauty justly shares the tribute paid to virtue. On the contrary, when the mistress of a family rambles abroad, her house is, like a lifeless body, soon corrupted; she herself loses her principal lustre, and appears to a great disadvantage; being stripped of her native ornaments. If she be married, what business hath she among the men? If single, why does she run the danger of disgusting, by her indecent behaviour, the man who might possibly be inclined to make her his wife? Let her act as she will, it is evident she is out of her sphere when she goes abroad; while even her beauty, which pleases the eye without engaging the heart, exposes her but the more to censure. Let this impression come from nature or education, it is no matter; it is universal and common to all nations. Women are every where respected for their modesty; and the men every where conceive that when the fair sex neglect their manners, they likewise neglect their duty. It is plain to all that when the women affect a manly assurance, it degenerates into effrontery; and that in debasing themselves by this odious imitation, they are a disgrace both to their own sex and ours.

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I know that in some countries different customs prevail ; but then observe of what kind of manners they have been productive. I should desire no other example to confirm my principles. Let us apply to the manners of women, what has been already mentioned respecting the honour that is paid them. Among the ancients, in all civilized nations, the women lived very close and retired : they appeared seldom in publick ; they never walked abroad with men ; they had not the front rows at the theatre * ; nor were even permitted to go to all kinds of entertainments. At the Olympic games in particular, it is well known, they durst not appear on pain of death.

At home they had a private apartment where the men never entered. It was seldom they appeared even at table, when their husbands had company to dinner. Women of reputation always went away at least before the end of the repast, and others did not appear there at the beginning. There was no common place of meeting for the two sexes ; nor did they ever spend the day together. By this means taking care not to be cloyed with each other's company, they met each other again with greater pleasure ; and it is certain that domestic peace in general, was much better established, and a greater harmony prevailed among married

* At the theatre in Athens, the women sat in an upper gallery, not very convenient either for seeing or being seen. It appears indeed from the adventure of Valeria and Sylla, that in the circus at Rome, the men and the women sat intermixed together.

people in those days, than there does at present *.

Such were the customs of the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and even of the Ægyptians, notwithstanding the illiberal pleasantry of Herodotus, which confutes itself. If the women sometimes trespassed the bounds of this modesty, the public outcry against them sufficiently shewed it was an exception to a general rule. What has not been said of the freedom of the Spartan women? From the *Lisistrata* of Aristophanes we may also learn, how much the impudence of the Athenian women was shocking to the Greeks in general. Even in Rome when corrupted, the people were offended at the scandal of seeing the Roman ladies present at the tribunal of the *Triumviri*.

Every thing is at present changed. When those swarms of barbarians spread themselves like a torrent over Europe, bringing their wives along with them to the field; the freedom of camps, added to the natural coldness of a northern climate, which rendered reserve less necessary, introduced a different manner of living; which was farther encouraged by books of chivalry; in which fair ladies are represented as passing their whole lives in procuring themselves to be run away with; tho' all very modestly and honourably. These books being the school of gallantry for the times, the

* We might impute the cause of this to the facility of obtaining divorces; but the Greeks seldom made use of this privilege; and Rome had existed five hundred years, before any body took advantage of the law permitting divorces.

people

people imbibed thence a notion of free converse between the sexes; which was soon introduced in courts and great cities, where they pretended most to politeness. This politeness, by its very progress, however, could not fail of degenerating into rudeness. Thus it was that the natural modesty of the sex disappeared, and the manners of suttlers wives were adopted by women of quality.

If you would know how shocking these customs appear to those who are not accustomed to them, you may judge from the confusion and surprize of foreigners and provincials, on their first seeing these modern manners. This confusion does honour to the women of their country; and it is possible that even those who occasion it, would be less proud of what they did, if they knew its real cause. It is not that they strike such persons with awe, as they may imagine, but rather that they put them to the blush; and that when a woman banisheth modesty from her discourse and behaviour, it naturally flies for shelter to the breast of man.

To return now to our actresses. I ask how it is possible for a profession, whose only object is to appear in public, and, what is worse, to appear for money, to be suitable to virtuous women, and to be compatible with modesty and good manners? Need we enter into any dispute about the moral difference of the sexes, to be convinced how natural it must be for a woman, who exposes her person for money on the stage, to be ready to do it elsewhere; and to be tempted to gratify those desires, which she takes so much pains to excite? Shall a prudent woman, who makes use of a thousand precautions to secure her virtue, find it difficult

after all to preserve her innocence, when she is exposed to the least danger? And shall these forward girls, who have no other education than what they learn from lessons of coquetry and amours; whose dress is not the most decent *, and who are constantly solicited by amorous young fellows, amidst the seductive sounds of love and pleasure; shall these girls, I say, be able to resist, at their age and their disposition, the seductive objects which surround them; the alluring discourse addressed to them; the opportunities and importunities continually presenting themselves; and, above all, that gold to which their hearts are already devoted? Sure we must be thought to be simple as children, to be thus imposed on! Vice endeavours in vain to conceal itself; its image is stamped on the countenance of the guilty. The impudence of a woman is a sure mark of her infamy; it is because she hath too much reason to blush that she ceases to blush any longer: and tho' shame may sometimes survive chastity, what must we think of chastity where shame itself is gone?

We will suppose if you will that there are some few exceptions; we will suppose

Qu'il en soit jusqu'à trois que l'on pourroit nommer.

I am inclined to believe, on this head, what I have never once seen or even heard of. Can we call that an honest profession, which makes a prodigy of a modest woman, and induces

* To this may be added, the reasonable supposition of their being handsome; which would certainly mend the matter greatly. See the dialogues on *Le fils naturel*, p. 183.

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every one to despise those who exercise it, at least without the constant interposition of a miracle? Immodesty is so intimately connected with their situation, and so sensible are they of it themselves, that there is not one of them who doth not think it ridiculous to assume personally those discourses of virtue and sobriety which she declaims in publick.

The actress indeed is always the first to parody her character and destroy the effects of her own declamation, lest such severe maxims should prove injurious to her private interest. She no sooner has done her part, than she throws off both the dignity and morality of it; and tho' one learns a lesson of virtue from her on the stage, one soon forgets it by her fire-side.

After what I have already advanced, I imagine there is no need to explain, how the loose behaviour of the actresses occasions that of the actors; especially as their profession obliges them to live together in great familiarity. Neither need I explain in what manner dishonest sentiments naturally arise from a dishonourable profession; nor how vice divides those whom a common interest ought to unite. I shall forbear to enter also the numerous subjects of discord, which the casting of parts, the sharing of the profits, the choice of plays and the jealousy of public applause must continually excite, particularly among the females; not to speak of their intrigues and gallantry. There is still occasion for me to expose the effects, which the association of extravagance and beggary unavoidably produce among these people. I have already said more than is necessary to convince you and all reasonable men; tho' I could never say enough to convince pre-

judiced persons, who are determined not to hear reason, unless when it suits their passions and prepossessions.

If all this be essentially connected with the profession of a player, by what method, Sir, shall we prevent the unavoidable effects? I see, for my part, but one; and this is to remove the cause. When a man from the nature of his constitution, or from any particular way of living, which he cannot change, brings distempers upon himself, can physicians prevent them? To prohibit a comedian being vicious, is the same as to forbid a man's being sick.

Does it hence follow that we ought to look upon all comedians as contemptible? On the contrary, a comedian of modest and moral behaviour, as you have well observed, is doubly respectable: as he shews that the love of virtue prevails over his other passions, and even the influence of his profession.

The only fault he is chargeable with, is his embracing that calling; but it frequently happens, that a single extravagance in youth determines our fate in life; and when a person hath a real genius for the stage, it is not easy for him to withstand its temptations. Good actors carry their excuse along with them: it is the bad only we despise.

I have dwelt thus long on my general proposition, not because I should have found it less convenient to apply it to the city of Geneva; but my reluctance to make my countrymen the subject, hath caused me to defer the mention of them as long as possible. To this point, however, we must come at last; and I should have executed my task very ill, did I not endeavour, from our particular circumstances and situation,

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to trace the consequences of erecting a theatre in our city; if the government should be induced by your advice and arguments to admit of it. To this end, I shall confine myself to effects so very striking, that they cannot be disputed by any one, who is in the least acquainted with our constitution.

Geneva is undoubtedly rich; but, though we see there none of those monstrous proportions of fortune, which impoverish a whole country to enrich a few individuals; scattering the seeds of beggary round the doors of the wealthy; it is yet very certain many of its inhabitants live very poorly, notwithstanding others are in affluent circumstances: the ease and affluence of the latter being more owing to constant application to business, to economy and moderation, than to absolute opulence. There are many cities, much poorer than ours, whose inhabitants might more freely indulge themselves in pleasures, because their territory, which affords them subsistence, is never exhausted; and, as their time is of no value, they may throw it away without loss. But this is, by no means the case with us, who have no territory to support us, and are forced to rely solely on our industry. The Genevans subsist absolutely on the fruits of their labour, and are furnished with necessaries from their denying themselves superfluities; and this is one of our reasons for sumptuary laws. It seems to me, that every foreigner, on his first entrance into Geneva, must be greatly struck with that air of life and activity, which appears throughout the whole city. Every body is employed; all are in motion; all busied in their several occupations. There is no small city, perhaps, in
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the world, that presents such a view. In the suburb of St. Gervais, you would think they had collected together all the clock-work in Europe. At the Molard, and in the lower streets, is all the appearance of merchandize, such as bales lying in heaps, hogsheds scattered up and down; and such an odour of spices, as would make you conceit yourself in a feaport. At the bleaching grounds and the rivers, the noise and appearance of the manufactories of printed linens and calicoes, seem to transport you to Zurich. The place is, in a manner, multiplied by these manufactories; and I have known persons, who at first sight reckoned it must have, at least, an hundred thousand inhabitants. Manual labour, the employment of time, diligence and parsimony, are the riches of the Genevans; and with these you would have us establish truly a nursery of idle people, who, by robbing us both of our time and money, will occasion us to sustain a double loss!

You agree with me that Geneva does not contain above twenty four thousand people. The city of Lyons, though in proportion much richer, and at least five or six times more populous, is just able to support one theatre; and when they play operas the town can hardly maintain it. At Paris, the metropolis of all France, and the gulph which swallows up the riches of the whole kingdom, three theatres are indifferently supported, and at a certain time of the year a fourth*. We will even sup-

* I do not reckon the *Concert Spirituel*, because it is only a supplement or appendix to the other entertainments. Neither do I include in this account the

suppose the latter kept open all the year round. Now it is certain, that out of six hundred thousand inhabitants, residing in this grand rendezvous of the idle and opulent, the theatres attract no more than a thousand or twelve hundred spectators daily. Taking a like view of the other parts of the kingdom, I find that Bourdeaux and Rouen, great sea-ports, as also Lisle and Strasburg, fortresses full of idle officers, who spend their whole lives in waiting for the clock, have each of them a play-house; and yet even in those towns there is a tax laid to support them. But how many other cities are there much larger than ours, in which are held sovereign and parliamentary courts, and yet are incapable of maintaining a regular theatre.

In order to be able to judge, whether we are in a better situation to do it than they, let us take a well known term of comparison; such, for example, is the city of Paris. I say then, if six hundred thousand inhabitants do not daily furnish the play-houses, take them all together, with more than twelve hundred spectators, less than twenty four thousand at Geneva would not supply a theatre with more than forty eight. We must deduct also from this number all those, who are admitted by orders gratis; and suppose likewise that there are as many idle people in

the drolls exhibited at the fair, but I reckon for the whole year, though the season lasts but six months. In making this enquiry, on comparison, whether it be possible for a company of comedians to subsist at Geneva, I suppose every thing more in favour of the affirmative, than is to be deduced from known facts.

proportion at Geneva as there are at Paris; which I can hardly do. Now if the French comedians, pensioned by the King, and proprietors of their own theatre, find it difficult to subsist at Paris, with three hundred * spectators every time they act; how will it be possible for a company to maintain themselves at Geneva, who are to depend only on forty eight? It will be said that people may live cheaper at Geneva than at Paris. They may so; but then the places at the theatre must be cheap in proportion: and besides, the table is one of the least expences of the comedians. It is their dress, their decorations, that cost so much money; and these must be purchased at Paris, or some workman must be taught to make them at Geneva. But these things are always cheapest where they are most common. Will it be said, that the comedians may be subjected to our sumptuary laws? It would be in vain, however, to attempt to extend this kind of reformation to the stage; a Xerxes and a Cleopatra would never be brought to relish such simplicity. As the profession of a comedian requires superb habits, it would be depriving him of a taste for his art to prohibit such dresses: and I very much doubt whether ever an excel-

* Those who go to the play only on holidays and particular nights, when the houses are crowded, may think I have rated this too low: but those who, like me, have frequented the theatre for ten years successively, will allow that I have rather over-rated the houses at an average. If, therefore, we are to diminish the daily number of three hundred spectators at Paris, we must also make a proportional diminution of the forty eight at Geneva; which will enforce my objections.

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lent actor turned quaker. Finally, it may be said that the company of comedians at Geneva being less numerous than that at Paris, it might be maintained at much less expence. I admit the truth of this; but cannot suppose the difference will be in the proportion of forty eight to three hundred. Add to this, that a more numerous company may play more frequently; whereas in a small number of actors, where duplicates are wanting, they may not all be able to play every day: hence the sickness or absence, though but of a single performer, will prevent the representations, and be of so much loss to the company.

The Genevans are extremely fond of a rural life: which you may infer from the number of little country seats situated about the town. The beauty of the neighbouring meadows, and the conveniency of hunting, encourage this salutary inclination. The gates of the city being shut at the close of the evening, the citizens are deprived of the freedom of walking out late; and, as their country-houses are so near, few persons in easy circumstances lie in town during the summer. After the business of the day is over, they betake themselves to their little retreats, before the gates are shut, to breathe a serener air, and to enjoy the prospect of the most delightful landscape perhaps under heaven. A great number of our citizens even reside the whole year in the country, and have no constant habitation in town. All these would bring nothing to the play-house; and in fine weather there would be hardly any body in town, but poor people who could little afford to go to such an entertainment. It is very different at Paris; where people may go to the play,

play, and yet sleep in the country: it being customary all the summer to see multitudes of coaches driving out of town, when the plays are over. With respect, indeed, to those who live in Paris, they are not so much induced by the freedom of going out of the gates at what hour they please, as they are disgusted at the inconveniences of it. The public walks so soon grow tiresome; it is necessary to go so far to get into the country; the environs are so greatly infected with a bad air, and there is so little beauty in the prospect, that they rather chuse to repair to the theatres. This is another difference, which must turn out greatly to the disadvantage of our comedians at Geneva; being no less than the loss of half a year's receipts. Can you imagine, Sir, they would so easily find the means to make up for this loss during the rest of the year? As to my part, I see no remedy for this inconvenience, than that of varying the hour for shutting our gates; to sacrifice our safety to our amusements; and to leave a fortress † open all night, in the midst of

† I am not insensible that our extensive fortifications are the most useless things in the world, and that they would be still so if we had even troops enough to defend them. For certainly nobody will ever attempt to besiege us. But, though we are in no danger of a siege, this should not prevent our guarding vigilantly against a surprize. A body of troops may be easily assembled in our neighbourhood. We have experienced this to our cost, as well as the use that may be made of such troops. It should be remembered, therefore, that, be the pretensions of an enemy ever so ill founded, while he is without the walls, they will prove sufficiently valid, should he get within.

three powers, the farthest of which is within half a league of our very glacis.

Nor is this all: it were impossible, in my opinion, that an institution, so inconsistent with our ancient maxims, should be very generally approved. How many honest citizens are there, who would behold with indignation this monument of effeminacy and luxury, erected on the ruins of our ancient simplicity, and threatening the destruction of our public liberty? Can you conceive that, after having so loudly condemned this innovation, they would countenance it by their presence? You may take it for granted that there are many of our citizens, who make no scruple of going to the theatre at Paris, and yet would never encourage plays at Geneva; the welfare of their country is dearer to them than their amusements. Where would be found the mother so imprudent as to take her daughter to this dangerous school? And how many virtuous women are there, who would think it dishonourable to go themselves? If there are some persons at Paris, who abstain from theatrical diversions, it is solely from motives of religion; which certainly should operate as powerfully at Geneva; where the farther motives of morality, virtue and patriotism, ought to restrain those who are not influenced by the former †.

I have shewn it to be absolutely impossible for a play-house to be supported at Geneva by the voluntary contributions of the spectators.

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† I do not mean to inculcate that we can be virtuous without religion: I was long of this specious opinion, but am at length undeceived. My meaning

Of two methods then, we must chuse one; either that the rich should support it by subscription among themselves; or that the government should interfere, and support it out of the revenues of state. And whence is this support to be deduced? Must it be by retrenching the necessary expences of administration, for which our very moderate revenues are hardly sufficient, that a sum adequate to this purpose must be raised? Or must the sums, which the integrity and economy of our magistracy sometimes lay up in reserve for the extraordinary emergencies of the state, be devoted to this important purpose? Must we cashier our little garrison, and stand centinel at our own gates? Shall we reduce the moderate fees of our magistrates, and improvidently deprive ourselves of every resource against the smallest unforeseen accident? If these expedients are objected to, I know of but one more, in any way practicable; and this is the laying a tax or impost on the public in general; to summon the citizens and house-keepers to a common council in St. Peter's church, and there gravely propose to them an assessment for the institution and support of a play-house. God forbid I should think our wise and worthy magistrates capable of ever making such a proposal: and indeed, from what is advanced in your own ar-

ing is, that Christians may sometimes abstain from some particular actions, merely through motives of social virtue; when those actions are in themselves indifferent, and do not affect the conscience; such as going to plays in a city where it is improper for plays to be permitted.

ticle, it is easy to judge of the manner in which it would be received.

Were we so unfortunate as to light upon some expedient to remove these difficulties, it would be still so much the worse : for this could never be done without encouraging some secret vice, which would sap the foundation of our little Republick, and sooner or later effect its destruction.

We will suppose, however, that our regard for the stage should work a miracle; so that a company of players established at Geneva should be kept within bounds by law, and the theatre be well managed and successful: we will suppose, finally, our city to be in the flourishing condition you describe, and that it really joined the advantages of good morals and public entertainments. Advantages, nevertheless, which to me seem incompatible; for the intent of public amusements being to supply the deficiency of morals, they are of course of no use where there is no such deficiency.

The first perceptible effect of that establishment would be, as I have already observed, a revolution in our customs; which would necessarily effect a revolution in our manners. We come now to enquire therefore, whether such a change would be to our advantage?

There is no well constituted state without certain customs and usages, so intimately connected with its form of government, that they contribute greatly to its support. Such, for example, was that of the clubs in London, so injudiciously ridiculed by the author of the Spectator; and which have been succeeded by coffee-

fee-houses and worse places of amusement. I doubt whether the English have got much by the exchange. Similar clubs are at present held at Geneva under the name of *circles*; and if I may judge from your article, you yourself can bear testimony of the good sense which prevails in those assemblies.

These meetings are of long standing with us, though their present appellation be new. Clubs, I know, were kept in Geneva, when I was very young, under the name of *societies*; but their form was less regular. Our military exercises, which assemble the people together in the spring of the year; the prizes bestowed at different seasons, and the feasts attending them, together with a taste for hunting common to the Genevans; all these things afforded frequent opportunities of friendly meeting and forming parties of pleasure; but, the intent of these meetings being nothing more than recreation, they seldom were held any where but in a tavern. Our civil discords and the necessity of our affairs, obliging us to assemble frequently, and to deliberate more coolly, those first tumultuous meetings were changed into more decent and regular assemblies. They then assumed the name of *circles*, and thus a very good effect succeeded a very bad cause †.

These *circles* are societies of twelve or fifteen persons who hire a convenient apartment, and furnish it with moveables and necessaries at their own charge. Hither the members, who are not engaged by pleasure or business elsewhere, resort every afternoon: each person

† I shall speak hereafter of its inconvenience.

purſuing without reſtraint ſuch amuſements as he is inclined to; whether it be play, converſation, reading, drinking, or ſmoking. Sometimes they ſup here, though but ſeldom; becauſe the Genevans are very regular in their families, and uſually ſup at home. It is common for the members of theſe circles to walk out together; when their amuſements conſiſt generally of ſuch exerciſes as are healthful and proper to invigorate the body. On the other hand, the women, married and ſingle, have their ſocieties at each other's houſes; where they divert themſelves at cards, with a collation; and, as you may well conceive, with inceſſant prattle. The men ſeldom are ſeen in theſe female ſocieties; from which, however, they are not ſtrictly excluded; and I ſhould think worſe of a man who ſhould be conſtantly there, than of one who never went thither at all.

Such are the daily amuſements of the citizens of Geneva; which, without excluding pleaſure or gaiety, have ſomething in them innocent and ſimple, which beſt ſuits with the manners of a republick. But if a play-houſe ſhould once be erected, we may bid adieu to our circles and ſocieties. This is the revolution I foretold; all theſe muſt neceſſarily have an end. You will object, perhaps, the example of London above-mentioned; where the exiſtence of theatres does not prevent the formation of clubs. But it is to be obſerved there is a very wide difference between London and Geneva. A theatre is no more than a ſimple point in ſo extenſive a city, whereas in ours it would be a large ſurface that would abſorb all other objects of amuſement.

If you proceed to ask me, where would be the damage if those circles were all put down—No, Sir, such a question can never come from a philosopher. This would be to talk like a woman or a young fop, who should treat our *circles* like guard-rooms, and object to their smell of tobacco. To this question, however, it will not be improper to give an answer: for, notwithstanding I address myself to you, I write for the public, as I doubt not it is pretty apparent: but it is you who have compelled me to it.

I say then, in the first place, that though the smell of tobacco may be disagreeable, it is very agreeable for men to be masters of their own property, and to be able to sleep quietly in their beds. But I already forget I am not writing for such men as M. d'Alembert. I must explain myself in another manner.

Let us pursue the indications of nature; let us consult the interest of society; we shall then find that the sexes ought sometimes to be assembled, though usually they should live separately. This I observed, a few pages before, with respect to women, and now I repeat the observation with regard to the men. The latter are affected by their conversation with the other sex, as much or rather more than the former. The women only hurt their morals, the men injure both their morals and constitution; for the weaker sex being incapable of conforming to our manner of life, which would be too laborious for them; we are obliged to take up with theirs, which is as much too indolent and effeminate for us: and as they will not afterwards admit of a separation,

tion, and want power to become men, they degrade us into women.

This inconvenience, which debases the men, is every where considerable: but it is particularly of the highest importance to prevent it in such a government as ours. As to a monarchy, it is no matter whether a king reigns over men or women, on condition that he is obeyed; but in a Republick it is necessary the subjects should be men*.

The ancients spent the greatest part of their lives in the open air, either in the management of their own business, in regulating affairs of state, or in walking in the fields, in gardens, or on the sea-shore; exposed to the sun and rain; and generally bare-headed†. On these occasions they were never accompanied by the women; tho' they knew where to find them when they wanted their company; and yet we

* I shall be told, perhaps, that kings want men too, in order to carry on their wars. By no means. They need only raise a hundred thousand women instead of thirty thousand men. Women do not want courage: they prefer their honour to life; and when they do fight, they fight in earnest. The inconvenience attending their sex, is, that they cannot support the toils of war, or the severity of the seasons. Thrice the number therefore should be raised as are wanted for fighting, in order to make up for the loss of two-thirds by hardships and mortality.

† After the battle gained by Cambyfes over Psammeticus, the Egyptians, who went always bare-headed, were known among the dead bodies by the thickness of their skulls: the Persians, who used to wear large tiaras on their heads, had such soft skulls that they were easily indented. Herodotus himself was long after witness to this difference.

do not perceive, either from their writings, or such sketches of their conversation as are transmitted to us, that this separation was in the least prejudicial either to their wit, their taste, or even to their amours. As to the moderns, they have acquired very different manners: devoted to the caprice of a sex, to which we should afford protection, and not pay homage, we have learned to despise them even in obeying them, and to affront them by our complaisance.

The Parisian ladies have assemblies of men, who are more effeminate than themselves, and know how to pay every homage to beauty, except that of the heart, which is its due. But, if we observe these men, we shall find they are still uneasy amidst this voluntary confinement; we see them alternately rising up and sitting down, running perpetually from the window to the fire-side and back again. How often will they take up a thing and lay it down again! How they rummage books, look at pictures, turn about the room; while the female idol reclines motionless on a sofa, and makes use of no other action than that of her tongue and her eyes. To what is this difference owing, but that nature dictates this sedentary method of life to women, and a very different one to men; in whom this evident restlessness under the like circumstances betrays a real want? The eastern nations, it is true, use but little exercise, and walk about little, the warmth of their climate causing them to perspire sufficiently without it; then they repose themselves in the open air and breathe freely; but in France the women are particularly solicitous

to stifle their friends in the closest rooms of their house.

If we compare the strength of the ancients with that of the moderns, we find no degree of equality. Our exercises at the academy are mere boy's play, compared with those of the ancient Gymnasia: even the game of tennis hath been neglected because it was too fatiguing, and we do not travel so much on horse-back as formerly. I do not speak here of our troops. The marches of the Greeks and Roman armies are now inconceivable; the length of way, the labour, the burthen of the Roman soldier, give us pain, and terrify the imagination even to read of them. The officers of the infantry were not permitted to ride on horse-back; even the generals frequently marching with their troops on foot. The two Catos never travelled otherwise, either when alone or with the army. Even Otho himself, the effeminate Otho, marched on foot, wearing a helmet, when he led his troops against Vitellius. I should be glad to see a single officer in the service capable of doing as much at present. We are sunk in every respect. It is the daily complaint of our sculptors and painters, that they can no longer find models equal to those of antiquity. And why so? Is nature degenerated? Is the species subject to a physical decrepitude like the individual? Not at all: the northern barbarians, who repeopled Europe, as it were, with a new race of men, were much larger and stronger than the Romans, whose empire they subverted: and hence we ought to be ourselves stronger, as being for the most part descended from those invaders.

But the ancient Romans lived like men *, and acquired by their constant exercises that vigour which nature had denied them ; whereas we, on the contrary, lose our natural strength by that indolent life, to which our servile attachment to the female sex hath reduced us. It is true, the barbarians, just mentioned, lived with their women ; but they did not live like women : on the other hand, their women had the hardiness to behave like men ; as did also the women of Sparta. Among both, the wife grew strong and robust without enervating the husband. As this solicitude to counteract nature, is hurtful to the body, it is also still more so to the mind. Imagine to yourself what kind of a soul that man must have, whose attention is entirely engrossed with the trifles belonging to women ; and who spends all his time in doing those things for them which they ought to do for us ; when wearied out with fatigue, we should be inclined to amuse ourselves with their company. Devoted to such puerile employments as these, how can it be expected we should rise to any thing truly great ? Our genius, our writings, all favour of these our frivolous occupations †. They are agreeable,
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* The Romans were the flightest-made men of all Italy : insomuch that, Livy tells us, their national troops were distinguished at first sight from those of the other parts of Italy. Yet such advantages did their discipline give them, that the weak were able to overcome the strong.

† Women in general are admirers of none of the arts ; they have no disposition for any, nor are they possessed of genius. They may succeed in little
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if you will, but empty and insipid as our sentiments; their whole merit consisting in giving an easy turn to mere trifles. Such performances live but for a day; and being calculated only to amuse the fair sex, fly speedily from the toilette to the pastry-cook's. By these means the same things may be perpetually repeated and pass for new. You may make, perhaps, a few exceptions; but I can cite you an hundred thousand instances to prove the assertion sufficiently general. It is for this reason most of the productions of the present times are so short-lived; whence posterity will be led to conclude that few books have been produced in an age, that abounds with their multiplicity.

It would be very easy to prove that the women, instead of being gainers by this change

performances, which require only sprightliness of fancy, delicacy of taste, or a superficial understanding. By dint of application, also, they may acquire science, erudition, literature, and whatever is to be attained by mere assiduity. But that celestial fire which warms and animates; that genius which consumes and devours; that glowing eloquence, those sublime transports, which penetrate the soul, will be ever found wanting in the works of female writers. Their compositions are pretty and cold like themselves: they have as much wit as you can desire, but never any force: they are an hundred times more sensible than passionate. They know not how to describe or even to feel the passion of love itself. Sappho and one more female author are alone to be excepted. I would venture to wager, that the famous Portuguese letters were written by a man. Now, wherever the women have the ascendant, a female taste must have the ascendant too; and this determines that of the present age.

of custom, are really losers. At present they are more flattered and less beloved. They are courted and not respected; they are surrounded by agreeable dangles, but have no real lovers; and what is still worse, the former usurp the privileges of the latter, without possessing the same sentiments. The too easy and frequent intercourse between the sexes, hath been productive of this effect: and thus it is that a general spirit of gallantry hath been at the same time destructive both of love and sincerity.

For my own part, I cannot easily conceive how men have arrived at this pitch of shewing so little respect for the fair sex, as to pester them with insipid phrases and ironical compliments, that wear not even so much as the appearance of sincerity. I should think that to affront them by such palpable falsehoods, ought to be accounted the same thing as to tell them we have nothing obliging to say to them. Love may deceive itself, with regard to the good qualities of the beloved object: this too often happens; but hath this any thing to do with the frivolous jargon I am speaking of? Do not those, who make use of it, address it indiscriminately to every woman they converse with? And would not they be heartily displeased, were they suspected to be seriously in love with any? They need not be uneasy, however, on this head. We must entertain but strange ideas of love to think them capable of that passion; for nothing is more unlike the voice of love than that of gallantry. From the notion which I conceive of this fatal passion; of its solitudes, its doubts, its palpitations, its transports, its glowing expressions, its still more expressive silence, its inexpressible

pressible looks, which grow rash even from timidity, and betray the fondness of desires by fear; it appears to me, I say, that after so impassioned a language as this, if the lover could once say to his mistress in mere words, *I love you*, she would certainly answer him with indignation, *No, you love me no longer*, and would never see him more.

Our circles preserve among us some faint image of ancient manners. The men, by conversing among themselves, are dispensed from levelling their notions of things to the capacities of the women, and from dressing up reason in the mask of gallantry. Thus they may enter into grave and sober conversation without being apprehensive of exposing themselves to ridicule. They may venture to speak of virtue and patriotism without passing for visionaries; and to assert their freedom, without being subjected to the caprices of a silly woman. If the conversation have possibly a turn less polite, the argument of it will have greater weight; for pleasantry and gentility have little force at Geneva. Difficulties are not there solved by turns of wit; nor do our disputants spare one another in an argument: every one, finding himself attacked with the whole force of his opponent, makes use of all his power in his defence: and thus it is the mind acquires accuracy and vigour. The Genevans will, indeed, fall into a little vulgarity of style on these occasions; but the least vulgar are not always the most virtuous; and tho' their language be rude and coarse, it is preferable to that studied delicacy of style, by which the sexes seduce each other, and become guilty of actual vice without breach of decency. The

way of life most agreeable to the inclinations of the men, is also the best adapted to their constitution. At Geneva they do not loll the whole day in an easy chair; but pursue such diversions as are accompanied with exercise. They go backward and forward, from their circles in town to those in the country, and vice versa. They have gardens to walk in; spacious courts for various kinds of exercise; a large lake for swimming, and a whole country open for sporting. Neither are you to conceive that this sport is so conveniently to be had there, as in the vicinage of Paris, where game may be found under foot, and killed as you ride on horseback. In fine, every thing is centered in our innocent and prudent institutions, that can in any shape contribute to make men friends, citizens, soldiers, and consequently whatever is best adapted to a free people.

The meetings of the females are charged with one objection, which is detraction: for it is very easily conceived that the anecdotes of small towns cannot escape the cognizance of these committees of women. It is also generally imagined, that their absent husbands are treated with no little severity, and that every pretty woman who is toasted by the men, has not always fair play given her at the circles of her neighbours. There results, however, more good than harm, perhaps, from this inconvenience; which is certainly less an evil than what it prevents. For it is surely much less criminal for a woman to speak ill of her husband, in company with other women, than for her to cuckold him with another man: it is better for her to censure than imitate the loose behaviour of licentious neighbours. It is true, the Genevan women talk

talk very freely of what they know, and not seldom of what they only imagine; they entertain, nevertheless, a real horror for calumny; and are never known to accuse any one of what they do not believe to be true. Whereas the women of other countries are equally criminal both in their silence and conversation; concealing the known vices of others, for fear of having reprisals made on themselves, and maliciously propagating such as are the mere work of invention.

How many public scandals are not suppressed through fear of these severe observers; who perform in some degree the business of censors. It was thus in the flourishing state of Rome, when its citizens, attentive to the conduct of each other, publicly accused the delinquent from a zeal for justice. But when Rome became corrupt, and nothing more was found necessary to be thought virtuous, than to conceal vices; the unmasking of vice drew hatred and contempt on the detector. Base informers succeeded zealous citizens, and instead of the good accusing the bad, as before, the former became the accused in turn. Thank Heaven! we are far from so fatal a period. We are not reduced to the necessity of hiding ourselves from our own eyes, lest we should be struck with horror. As to my part, I shall not have a jot better opinion of the women, when they grow more circumspect. They will be more sparing of their sex, when it stands in more need of indulgence, and when individuals require for themselves that discretion, which they set the example of to others.

There is no occasion to be so much alarmed, therefore, at the tattle of female societies.

Let them rail and backbite as much as they will, while they do it only among themselves. Women really corrupted in their morals, would not long support such a kind of life; but, however fond they might be of detracting from other women, they would chuse to do it in the company of the men. Whatever may be said on this subject, I never saw any one of these societies, without having a secret emotion of esteem and respect for those who composed it. Such, reflected I, is the intention of nature; which hath given different inclinations to the two sexes, in order that they may live separate, each after its own manner*. Thus do these amiable persons spend their days, busied in occupations suitable to them, or in innocent and simple amusements, that cannot fail to affect an ingenuous heart, and to give it also a good opinion of their virtue. I know not what they talk about; but they live one among another: they probably talk about the men, but they amuse themselves without them; and though they criticise so severely on the conduct of others, their own is at least irreproachable.

The circles of the men have also, doubtless, their inconveniences; and what human institution is without? They play, drink, get fuddled, and sit up all night. All this may be very true, or it may be very much exaggerated. We find in every thing, a mixture of good and

* This principle, on which all good morals depend, is explained after a more clear and copious manner in a manuscript, deposited in my hands, and which I propose publishing, if I should ever have time. Though this declaration is by no means likely to prepossess the ladies in favour of it.

evil,

evil, in different proportions. Every thing is subject to be abused: a trifling maxim that should teach us neither to reject or admit things by wholesale. The rule of choice is easy and simple. When the good of any thing exceeds the evil of it, it ought to be admitted, notwithstanding its being attended with inconveniences. On the other hand, when the evil exceeds the good, it should be rejected even with all its advantages. When a thing is good in itself, and bad only from its abuse; which may be prevented with little trouble, or permitted with little prejudice, such abuse may serve for a pretext, though not for a reason to abolish a useful custom. But whatever is in itself bad will always be so †; what pains soever are taken to put it to a good use. Such is the essential difference between the circles and the play-houses.

The citizens of the same Republick, living together in the same city, are not Anchorites, they cannot live always separate and retired; and if they could, they ought not to be com-

† I et us not calumniate even the vice itself, it is sufficiently disgustful without exaggeration. Wine does not instill wickedness; it only discloses it. He who killed Clitus, in the heat of wine, put to death Philotas in cold blood. If ebriety hath its paroxysms, what passion is without them? The difference is, that the others lie rooted in the bottom of the heart, whereas this takes fire, blazes, and is extinguished in a moment. If we except just the heat of rage, which soon goes off and is easily avoided, be assured he that commits wicked actions when drunk, broods over wicked designs when he is sober.

pelled to it: Nothing but the most barbarous tyranny can be alarmed at seeing seven or eight people assembled together for their reciprocal amusement, out of a suspicion that they can talk of nothing but their oppressions.

Now of all those kinds of connections which can induce individuals to assemble together in a city like ours, the circles are beyond contradiction the most rational, the most innocent and least dangerous: because they neither are, nor desire to be concealed; they are open, publick and orderly. It is even easy to prove that the abuses that arise from them, would arise equally from all other meetings, or that most others would produce much greater. Before we determine to abolish an established custom, it is necessary to have considered well the nature of what is to be introduced in its place. If any body can propose a scheme that is practicable, and attended with no inconvenience; let him produce it, and let the circles be immediately abolished. In the mean time, however, let us, if it be necessary, permit those to pass away the night in drinking, who might otherwise spend it in something worse.

All kind of intemperance is undoubtedly vicious, and particularly that which deprives us of the noblest of our faculties. Excessive drinking debases a man, alienates his reason, at least for a time, and in the end destroys it. And yet the love of wine is not in itself a crime, and indeed is seldom the cause of committing crimes. It renders a man rather stupid than wicked, and, for one short quarrel it may occasion, it gives birth to a hundred lasting attachments. Generally speaking, bottle-companions are
frank

frank and generous; they are most of them ingenuous, friendly, honest, faithful, brave, good sort of people, if we except their peculiar foible. Can so much be said in favour of any other vice that might be substituted in the room of this? Or would any one pretend that the inhabitants of a whole city should be entirely faultless? How many real vices are often couched under apparent virtues! The man of virtue is sober from temperance, the knave from art and design. In a country of corrupt morals, of intrigues, conspiracies and adulteries, men are fearful of that state of unreservedness, wherein the heart indiscreetly unbosoms all its secrets. Indeed the people, who most abhor drunkenness, are those whose interest it is most to guard themselves against it. In Switzerland it is almost in esteem: at Naples it is looked upon with horror: But in fact, which is most to be feared, the open intemperance of the Swiss, or the reserved sobriety of the Italian?

I again say, it is undoubtedly better to be sober and honest, not only for one's own sake, but for that of society: for whatever is bad in morals, is still as bad in politicks. But the divine attends only to its consequences to individuals, the magistrate only to its consequences to the publick. The former has in view that perfection of man, which man will never attain to; the latter the welfare of the state, as far as it is attainable. It does not follow, therefore, that every thing justly censured in the pulpit, deserves to be punished by the laws. There never was a nation destroyed by the inordinate use of wine, but all have perished through a licentious use of women. The reason of this difference is clear; the first of these

two vices diverts people from practising others, whereas the second generates all the rest. The difference of ages hath also a great influence in this affair. Wine is less tempting and less depressive to youth; their warmth of blood instills other desires. During the reign of the passions, a single spark from one will set the rest in a flame: Reason is clouded at its very dawn, a man grows impatient of its restraint before he hath born the yoke of the laws. But when the freezing blood of age seeks relief, and finds an animating warmth in the generous liquor that recruits the spirits*: if the old man should even abuse this agreeable remedy, what is it? He hath already discharged his duty to his country, and deprives it only of the lees and dregs of life. He is, doubtless, much to blame, as he ceases, before his death, to act the part of a citizen. But the debauchee as to women, never commences citizen; declaring himself rather a public enemy, by the seduction of his accomplices, by the example and effect of his licentious manners, and above all, by that pernicious system of morality, which he does not fail to propagate in his own justification. It had been better certainly that he had never existed.

From the passion for gaming, there arises a more dangerous abuse; but which is easily prevented or suppressed. This is an affair of police, which can with more ease and propriety inspect the conduct of the circles than that of private houses. Public opinion may also have

* Plato, in his laws, allows the use of wine to old men only, and even he allows them sometimes to indulge themselves in it, to an excess.

a great effect in this matter; and whenever games of activity and exercise come into fashion; cards, dice and hazard will infallibly go out. I cannot believe indeed, whatever may be pretended, that such idle and tricking methods of getting money, ever will obtain much among a sensible and industrious people, who know too well the value of their time and money, to throw both away together.

Let us then keep our circles with their inconveniences: for these inconveniences are not the fault of the circles themselves, but of the people composing them; and there is no institution in society under which the same defects are productive of less pernicious consequences. I say again, let us not go in search for chimerical perfection; but for the best state of things that can be obtained, according to the nature of man and the constitution of society. I should say, indeed, to some nations; Down with all your clubs and circles, take away every barrier of decency between the sexes, endeavour to reach the height of corruption; but to you, my fellow-citizens, I say, Avoid being corrupted, if it be not already too late. Be cautious of taking the first step, which is ever followed by another, and reflect that it is much more easy to preserve good morals than to restrain bad.

In two years time, the play-house will have subverted every thing. The town cannot divide itself among so many amusements: the play-houses opening at the time the circles begin, will dissolve the latter: they will detach too many of their members; and the rest will be too little assiduous in their attendance to support those associations for any length of time.

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The meeting of both sexes daily in the same place; the parties which will be formed to that end; the manners which they will see described on the stage, and which they will endeavour to imitate; the exhibition of the ladies, dressed up in their best attire, and placed in the front of the boxes, as in a shop-window to invite customers; the concourse of young fellows who on their side also will come to shew themselves, and think it much finer to figure away at the theatre than on the parade; the little appointments of the females to supper, though it were only with the adresses; in a word, that contempt of the ancient customs which will result from the adoption of new ones: all this will presently substitute the agreeable manner of living at Paris, and the trifling airs of the French, in the room of our ancient Swiss simplicity; and I very much doubt whether Parisians would long preserve a taste for the government of Geneva.

It were wrong to dissemble; our intentions are as yet good; but our morals are visibly on the decline, and we are following at a distance, the footsteps of those very people, whose fate we yet have reason to dread. I am assured, for example, that the education of our youth, is, in general, much better than formerly; which cannot be proved, however, but by shewing that they make better citizens. It is certain, that our little masters are taught to make a more graceful bow; that they are taught to hand the ladies more politely, and to say a number of pretty things to them: for which, if I had my will, they should be heartily whipped. It is certain they take more readily on them to speak, to ask questions, to inter-

rupt

rupt grown persons in their discourse, and to be troublesome to every body they come near. All this, it is said, tends to form them; I grant it forms them to be very impertinent, and of all the things they learn by these means, this is the only one they never forget. But this is not all. In order to keep them constantly near the women, as play-things for their amusement, care is taken to educate them exactly in the same manner: thus they are kept from the sun, the wind, the rain, and the dust, that they may never be able hereafter to support any of the inconveniences of the weather. As they cannot however be secluded entirely from the pressure of the external air, care is taken to prevent their feeling it, till it hath lost half its elasticity. Thus they are deprived of all exercise, robbed of their faculties, and rendered good for nothing but the purpose for which they are thus preposterously educated; while the only thing the women require of these pitiful slaves, is, to have them devoted to their service, in the manner of the Orientals. When I was last at Geneva, I saw several of these young ladies in breeches, with white teeth, soft hands, shrill voices, and pretty green umbrells in their hands, aukwardly affecting the characters of men. When I was a boy, we were more gross and indelicate: educated in a rustic manner, children had no apprehensions of spoiling their complexions, nor were they afraid of the inclemencies of the weather to which they had been early inured. Their fathers took them into the country with them, carried them a hunting, and into all their rustic exercises and companies. Timid and modest before persons

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in years, they were bold and quarrelsome enough among one another. They were not afraid of disordering their curled locks, but challenged each other to wrestle, to run, or to fight: they fought also in good earnest, sometimes hurt themselves considerably, and then crying, shook hands, and made all up. They would often come home sweating and out of breath, with their cloaths torn off their backs, like true slovens as they were. But then these slovens of boys grew up to be men, who have at heart the love of their country, and in their veins that blood which they are ready to spill in its defence. God grant we may be able to say as much of those little smug gentry, our present youth; and that these men at fifteen may not turn out children at thirty.

Happily they are not all of this kind. Most of them have preserved that ancient rusticity, which is at once the preserver of a good constitution and of good morals. Even those, whom a too tender education hath rendered effeminate for some time, will be reduced to the necessity, as they grow up, to comply with the customs and manners of their fellow countrymen. The one will lose their rudeness in a commerce with the world; and the other gain strength by exercise; thus all, I hope, will become what their ancestors formerly were, or at least what their fathers now are. But, let us not flatter ourselves with preserving our liberty, if we renounce those manners, by which it was acquired.

To return to our comedians, whom we will suppose, though in reality I think it impossible, to have succeeded in their design. Their very
success

success must attack our constitution; and that not only in an indirect manner by hurting our morals; but directly by disturbing that equilibrium, which ought to prevail in the different parts of a state, in order to preserve the proper situation of the whole.

Out of many reasons that might be alledged, I shall content myself with one which is better adapted to the majority; because it is confined to considerations of money and interest, more striking to vulgar minds than moral effects; of which and their causes they are incapacitated to see the connection; as well as of their influence on the destiny of a state.

Theatres, where they meet with success, may be considered as a kind of tax; which, though voluntarily paid, is not the less burthensome to the people; as it lays them open to the constant temptation to an expence which they cannot resist. This tax is a destructive thing; not only because it produces nothing to the sovereign; but because the expence is not proportionably divided among the public; the poor being loaded beyond their abilities, and the rich being furnished with a less costly amusement than they would otherwise maintain. To prove this, we need only reflect on the difference in the price of the places, which are not; nor cannot be, proportionate to the fortunes of the people who fill them. At the French comedy, the first boxes and the stage are generally four livres, and are sometimes enhanced a third: the pit is thirty sous. and they have even attempted sometimes to raise it. Now it cannot be pretended, that the income of the rich, who sit in the boxes, is not more than four times the income of those who sit in the pit.

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Generally speaking, the former are excessively opulent, and the greater part of the latter are actually indigent *. It is in this case, as it is in that of duties laid on corn, wine, salt, and other necessaries of life; which have at first sight the appearance of equity, but are in fact very iniquitous. For the poor, who can afford to spend no more than is sufficient for bare necessities, are at three fourths of their expence for taxes; while mere necessities being the least part of the expences of the rich, they hardly feel the duty †. Thus he who possesses

* Nay, were the prices of places settled in proportion to that of fortunes, this would not bring things to an equality. The inferior places, being rated too low, would be left to the populace, while every man above that class, would spend more than he ought, for a more respectable seat. This may be remarked even in the theatrical booths at our fairs. The reason of this disorder is, that the first places are then a fixed term, which cannot be removed; while the others are constantly drawing nearer to it, without a possibility of preventing their approach. The poor man constantly endeavours to surpass his twenty sous; but the rich one has no where to fly to, beyond his four livres. He must, therefore, let the poor approach, whether he will or not; and though his pride suffer by it, his purse is the gainer.

† Hence it is that the *imposteurs*, or tax-projectors, of *Bodir*, and other knaves to the public, always lay their monopolies on the necessities of life, that the poor may be gradually starved, and the rich have no reason to complain. If the smallest object of pomp or luxury were attacked, they would think the nation undone; but provided the great live at their ease, what signifies it whether the poor survive or not?

but little, pays a great deal in taxes, and he who possesses a great deal, pays but little. I do not see, for my part, any equity in this.

Will it be asked, who compels a poor man to go to the play at all? I shall answer, first, those who establish them, and lay the temptation in his way: secondly, his very poverty itself, which, condemning him to incessant labour, renders some relaxation the more necessary for him to support it. He does not think himself unhappy in working, however, when he sees every body else do the same; but will he not think it cruel that an industrious man should be deprived of the amusements of the indolent? He therefore partakes of them; while the very recreation which is economical in the rich, doubly impoverishes the poor, either by a real increase of expences, or at least by giving him a disgust to labour, as I have already explained.

From these additional reflections it evidently follows, in my opinion, that our modern theatres, at which persons pay money for their admittance, have a tendency to increase the inequality of fortune among individuals; though less perceptibly, I must confess, in great capitals, than in such a small city as ours. Should I grant that this inequality, carried to a certain degree, may have its advantages; you must certainly grant, on the other hand, that it ought to have its bounds, particularly in a small state, and more particularly in a Republick. In a monarchy, where all orders of people are intermediately arranged between the prince and the populace, it is a matter of indifference for men to remove from one rank to another: because

cause their place is soon supplied by others, and the progression is uninterrupted. But in a democracy, where the subjects and sovereign are only the same persons, considered under different relations, the minority no sooner grow richer than the majority, than the state is ruined, and must change its form. Now whether the wealthy grow wealthier, or the poor still poorer, the difference between their fortunes increaseth equally; and this difference carried beyond its due proportion, is what destroys the equilibrium abovementioned.

In monarchies no wealth can raise a private man above the prince; but in a Republick it may easily set him above the laws: in which case the government has no longer any influence, but the rich man is the actual sovereign. This being indisputable, it remains to be considered whether the inequality of private fortunes with us, is not carried as far as it can be, without shaking the basis of the Republick.

I refer the decision of this point to those, who are better acquainted than I am with our constitution, and the proportions of our fortunes. All I know is this, that, as things take, from time to time, a natural tendency to this inequality, successively proceeding to its last term, it is highly imprudent to accelerate it, by establishments that will increase that tendency. The great Sully, who had an affection for us, was so good as to tell us, that play-houses and public entertainments in every small Republick, and particularly at Geneva, were destructive to the state.

If now the mere institution of a theatre would be so very detrimental to us, what can

we suppose would be the effect of the plays represented there? Even the advantages thence arising to a people for whom they were originally composed, would turn out to our prejudice, in giving us for instruction what was given them as censure, or at least in directing our taste and inclination toward those things, which, of all others in the world, would suit us least. Tragedy would represent to us the actions and heroes of tyrants. And what have we to do with these? Are we formed either to encourage or become such? It will inspire in us a vain admiration of power and grandeur. And of what use will this be? Shall we be thence either more great or powerful? Of what consequence is it to us to go and learn the duty of Kings at the theatre, while we neglect our own duty at home? Will the empty admiration of theatrical virtues, supply the want of simplicity and modesty, which are characteristic of a good citizen? Comedy, on the other hand, instead of ridding us of our present race of impertinents, will infect us with fresh ones; it will persuade us that we are to blame to despise vices, which are in such high esteem elsewhere. Let a Marquis be ever so absurd and extravagant, still he is a Marquis. Do but imagine how this title sounds in a country so happy as to have no Marquisses of its own; and who knows how many trades-people may take it into their heads to follow the fashion in imitating the Marquisses of the last century? I shall not repeat what I have already said of the raillery constantly thrown on probity; of the constant triumph of artful vice; and the continued example of treating wicked-

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ness with pleasantry. How pernicious must such lessons be to a people who still retain the sentiments of natural rectitude, who conceive a villain to be always despicable, and that an honest man is never a proper object of ridicule! Did Plato banish Homer from his Republick, and shall we admit of Moliere in ours? Can any thing worse ever happen to us, than to resemble the people he describes, or even those which he represents as amiable?

I conceive enough hath been already said on this head; nor have I a better opinion of the heroes of Racine; those heroes so well dressed, and so passionately loving; who, under the pretence of virtue and fortitude, exhibit only examples of young persons given up to gallantry and effeminacy; and in short, to every thing capable of enervating a man, and rendering him remiss with regard to his real duties. The French theatre breathes nothing but the tender passion: this truly is the great virtue, to which all others are sacrificed, or which is, at least, presented in the fairest light to the spectators. I do not say the poets are wrong in this. A man without passions is a chimera: the drama becomes interesting solely from the effect of the passions; while the heart is not engaged by the passions that no way affect it, nor by those which it disapproves in others, notwithstanding it may be equally subject to them itself. The love of mankind and of our country, are sentiments that most affect those who are subject to their influence; but when these two passions are extinguished, there remains nothing but that of Love, properly so called, to supply its place; because its attractions are more natural,
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and it is less easily effaced from the heart than all others. It is not, however, equally adapted to all men ; but is to be admitted rather as a supplement to virtuous sentiments, than as a virtuous sentiment itself, and to be admitted for its own sake. Not that it is discommendable in itself, any more than any other well regulated passion ; but, because its excesses are dangerous and almost inevitable.

The worst man is he, who detaches himself the most from the rest of mankind, and who concentrates his affections within himself ; the best is he who most diffuses those affections among his fellow-creatures. Now it were better for a man to love a mistress than to love nobody. But if a man hath a tender affection for his relations, his friends, his country and mankind, he debases himself by an irregular attachment which is presently injurious to the others, and is infallibly preferred to them : It is on this principle I say, that there are countries, whose morals are so corrupt, that it would be happy for the people if they could reach so high as the passion of love ; and that there are others again whose morals are so good, that it is a pity they should descend so low ; among the latter of which, I flatter myself, I may rank my own country. Add to this, that the sight of objects of too delicate a nature is more dangerous for us than to any other people ; because we are naturally too much addicted to the passion of love. The Genevan conceals under a stiff and phlegmatic air and deportment an ardour of disposition, which is much easier excited than restrained. In this residence of reason and good sense, we are no strangers to

beauty, nor to its influence. The leaven of melancholy often gives fermentation to love; the men being but too subject to violent passions, as the women are to inspire them. The fatal effects which they have sometimes produced, also, shew but too plainly the danger of exciting them by soft and affecting representations. The heroes in some pieces, it is true, make their love submit to duty; but even then, though we admire their fortitude, we approve their weakness. We learn less to imitate their courage, than to expose ourselves to the circumstances of standing in need of it.

It is true, in such a case there is greater room for the exercise of virtue; but he who wilfully runs into danger, deserves to fall. Love, even love itself, puts on its mask to surprize us; it dresses itself up in the enthusiasm, and assumes the language of virtue; and when our error is discovered, it is always too late to retract. How many worthy men are there, who were at first generous and tender lovers, that have been seduced by false appearances to become vile corrupters of innocence, without morals, without regard to conjugal fidelity, or to the sacred ties of friendship. Happy is he who, when he is on the brink of a precipice, is able to check himself and save his fall. But is it when we are on full speed, that we are expected to stop short in our career? Are we to learn to subdue the passion of love, by laying ourselves constantly open to its tenderness? One may easily triumph over a slight inclination; but, if there be a man who hath felt the real influence of that passion, and hath been able to overcome it; if such a mortal exists, I say,

say, he may well be pardoned for pretending to virtue.

Thus, in whatever light we take a view of this matter, we are constantly struck with the same truth. The whole merit and use of theatrical performances, even with regard to those people for whom they are adapted, will, with respect to us, become highly prejudicial; not excepting the very taste which we may imagine we derive from them; and which will be only a false taste, without discernment or delicacy, injudiciously substituted among us for the solidity of reason. Taste depends on a variety of circumstances. The attempts at imitation, which we see at the theatre, the comparisons we make there, the reflections on the art of pleasing the audience, may make it bud, but never will cause it to blow in full perfection. This requires that men should live in great cities; it requires luxury and the fine arts, an intimate commerce between fellow-citizens: it requires gallantry, and even debauchery; in fine, it requires the vices which we are forced to render agreeable, and by doing which, we are led to the investigation of every thing that is so. Part of these things we shall always want, and we ought to tremble at the thoughts of acquiring the other.

We shall have comedians, but what kind of comedians? Will a good company come and settle immediately in a town that has only twenty four thousand inhabitants? We shall at first, therefore, have but bad ones, and shall thence be for some time bad judges of their performances: and are we to improve them, or they us? We may have good pieces; but re-

ceiving them as such on the authority of others, we shall dispense with enquiring into their merit, and shall learn as little by seeing them acted, as by reading them. We shall not be the less fond, however, of setting up for connoisseurs, and theatrical critics; we shall not be the less forward to take upon us to decide for our money; which will only render us the more ridiculous. There is nothing ridiculous in our wanting taste when we despise it: but it is greatly so to pride ourselves in having a taste, when it is a bad one. And after all, what is in reality this so much boasted taste? The art of judging of trifles. In fact, when we have so great an object to preserve as our liberty, every thing else is very puerile.

I see but one remedy against these numerous inconveniences: which is for us to suit our dramas to our stage, by composing them ourselves, and having authors before we have comedians.

For it is not proper we should be shewn all kinds of imitation, but only such as are decent and becoming freemen *. Certain it is, that

* Si quis ergo in nostram urbem venerit, qui animi sapientia, in omnes possit sese vertere formas, et omnia imitari, volueritque poemata sua ostentare venerabimur quidem ipsum, ut sacrum admirabilem et jucundum: dicemus autem non esse ejusmodi hominem in republicâ nostrâ, neque fas esse ut insit, mittemusque in aliam urbem, unguento caput ejus perungentes lanâque coronantes. Nos autem austeriori minusque jucundo utemur poetâ, fabularumque fictore, utilitatis gratiâ, qui decori nobis rationem exprimat, et quæ dici debent dicat

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that plays, founded, like those of the Greeks, on the past misfortunes of their country, or the present faults of the people, might afford very useful institutions to an audience. But who are to be the heroes of our tragedies? A Berthelier or a Levrery *! Most worthy citizens, ye were doubtless heroes; but, debased by your obscurity, your vulgar names dishonour your great souls; nor are we ourselves great enough to admire them. Who shall be our tyrants? Shall they be gentlemen of the spoon †! Bi-
in his formulis quas à principio pro legibus tulimus, quando cives erudire aggressi sumus. *Plat. de Rep. lib. 3.*

* Philibert Berthelier was the Cato of our country, with this difference, that public liberty began with the one, and ended with the other. He had a tame weasel at the time he was put under arrest; when he delivered up his sword, it was with that ease and placidity which becomes virtue in disgrace: after which he continued to play with his weasel, without deigning to make any reply to the insults of his guards. He died, as a martyr to liberty should die.

John Levrery was the Favo, the copyist, of Berthelier, not merely by a puerile imitation of his speech and manners, but by a calm resignation to Providence: well knowing that the example of his death would be more useful to his country than his life. Before he mounted the scaffold, he wrote the following epitaph on the wall of the prison, which had been made for his predecessor:

Quid mihi mors nocuit? virtus post fata virefcit:
Nec cruce, nec sævi gladio perit illa tyranni.

† This was an association of gentlemen of Savoy, who made a vow to plunder the city of Geneva; and, as a token of their engagement, used to wear a spoon hung about their necks.

shops of Geneva! Counts of Savoy! the ancestors of a house, with which we have lately entered into a treaty, and which we are thence bound to respect. I would not answer for it that fifty years ago, the devil and anti-christ would not have been introduced as persons of the drama *. Among the Greeks, who were notwithstanding a people of great levity, patriotism was always a grave and serious subject; but in this ludicrous age, when almost every thing but power is turned into ridicule,

* I remember to have read, when I was a boy, a low tragedy, wherein the devil himself was one of the *Dramatis Personæ*. I was informed that this play having been once acted, this personage when he came upon the stage appeared double, as if the real devil had been jealous at any one's attempting to mimic him, and that the spectators were struck with a consternation which put an end to the performance. This is most undoubtedly a ridiculous story, and will appear much more so at Paris than at Geneva. On the supposition, however, that it be true, there was something truly theatrical in this double appearance, which had a striking effect.

I can imagine but one object more simply terrible, viz. that of the hand appearing on the wall and writing unintelligible characters, at the feast of Belsazzar. The very idea of this is enough to make one's hair stand on end. It appears to me, that our dramatic poets fall very short of these sublime inventions: they make a noise indeed, behind the scenes, with a view to frighten us, but without effect.

Every thing ought not to be exposed to view, even on the stage; it is the imagination only that should be affected.

people.

people venture to talk of heroism only in great monarchies, while it is alone to be found in petty Republicks.

As to comedy, we must not so much as think of it. It would produce at Geneva a prodigious deal of mischief; serving as an instrument to faction, party and private revenge. Our city is so small, that a description of manners the most general would presently degenerate into personal satire. The example of ancient Athens, a city incomparably more populous than Geneva, affords a very striking lesson. It was the stage that prepared the way for the banishment of many of their great men, and for the death of Socrates. It was the theatre that brought on the ruin of Athens; whose calamities did but too well justify the apprehensions which were expressed by Solon on the first exhibitions of Thespis. This at least is certain, with respect to Geneva, that it will be a very inauspicious omen to see its citizens converted into wits, and employed in writing French verses and comedies; a task for which we neither have, nor ever shall have, proper talents. But let Mr. de Voltaire condescend to favour us with tragedies after the same models as the death of Cæsar, or the first act of Brutus; and, if we must absolutely have a theatre, let him engage to supply it constantly with the productions of his genius, and to live as long as his writings!

The subjects of all these reflections, ought, in my opinion, to be maturely considered, before we take into the account that passion for dress and dissipation, with which the example

of the comedians must necessarily infect our youth : this example will also have an additional effect : for if, generally speaking, the laws are insufficient to stem the torrent of vices arising immediately from the nature of the circumstance itself, as I think I have shewn, how much more insufficient will they be with us, when the very first proof of it is to be the establishment of a company of comedians ! It is not, in fact, the comedians that are to introduce this taste for dissipation ; on the contrary, it is this taste which paves the way for the reception and introduction of the comedians ; while they, on the other hand, will contribute only to strengthen an inclination already formed ; and which, having gained them admittance, will cause them for a better reason to be continued, with all their inconveniences.

I proceed constantly on the supposition, that the comedians will be able to get an easy livelihood in so small a city ; and say farther that, if ever they come to be respected, as you conceive, in a country where almost every body is on an equality, the consequence will be that they must partake of this equality ; and obtain by degrees the public favour, which they will very naturally acquire. They will not be checked and awed into respect, as in other places, by the Great, whose protection they seek, and whom they are therefore afraid to offend. The magistrates will restrain them ; do you say ? Be it so. But these magistrates will be such as have been private people, and perhaps intimate with these players : their children also may have entered into the same intimacies, and their wives may be fond of plea-

pleasure. All these connections form so many openings to protections and indulgence, which it will be impossible to keep always guarded. The comedians by this means will be presently certain of impunity, and will procure the like for their imitators; it is with them the disorder will begin, but we know not with whom it will have an end. Our women and young people, the rich and idle, will join their party, in order to evade the laws by which they are restrained, and to encourage their licentiousness, while every one will think he is studying his own pleasures in providing for their security. And who will dare to stem such a torrent? Nobody, except some rigid old parson, whose remonstrances will be despised, and whose gravity and good sense will be looked upon as moroseness and pedantry by our inconsiderate youth. In a word, I make no doubt, if the comedians manage matters well, and conduct themselves with art and policy, in proportion to their success, but that in thirty years time, they will be masters of the state*. Those persons who may become candidates for public offices, will pay court to them for their votes; electioneering will be carried on in the boxes of the actresses; and the chiefs of a free people will become the creatures of a company of

* It is always to be observed that, in order to support a theatre at Geneva, our passion for its entertainment must be excessive; if it be only moderate, the play-house must fail. It is but reasonable, therefore, in examining the effects of the theatre, that they should be proportionable to the cause able to support it.

stage-players ! My pen is ready to fall from my hand at this thought. Let the event be supposed at what distance you will, or let me be conceived to have carried my apprehensions too far, I have but a word more to say. Happen what will, either these gentry must reform their manners by living among us, or we must corrupt ours, by living with them. When this alternative shall be no longer formidable, the comedians may come as soon as they will ; it will not be in their power to hurt us.

Such, Sir, are the reflections I had to make, and to lay before you and the public, in relation to a question which you thought proper to discuss under an article, which was in my opinion quite foreign to the purpose. But, though my arguments should be in fact less solid than they appear to me, and therefore insufficient to counterballance yours ; you must yet agree with me, that in so small a state as the Republic of Geneva, all innovations must be dangerous ; and that they should never be made without very cogent reasons. Now I should be glad to know the urgent motives of this. What are those disorders, which should oblige us to have recourse to so dangerous an expedient ? Are we undone if we do not adopt this measure ? Is our city so extensive, that it is impossible for our state to subsist any longer without theatrical entertainments ? Will you say that it tolerates worse ? even such as are shocking to good taste as well as morality ? But there is a very wide difference betwixt the bare exhibition of vice, and a direct attack on virtue : the latter depending not so much on the nature of the entertainment as on the impression made by it,
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In this sense, what affinity or connection is there between a few temporary drolls at a fair, and the constant amusements of an established theatre; between the buffoonery of a mountebank, and the regular exhibitions of the drama; between dirty booths erected to divert the populace a day or two, and a decent theatre, where genteel people expect to be instructed? One kind of these amusements is of no consequence, being forgotten the next day; while the other is an object of great importance, meriting the whole attention of government. It is permitted to amuse children in all countries; and every one that has a mind to it, may be a child when he pleases without any great inconvenience. If such diversions are tasteless, so much the better; the people will be the sooner tired of them: if they are gross and indelicate, they will be less seductive. Vice seldom gains ground by transgressing the bounds of modesty, but generally by disguising itself under a decent appearance; and with regard to obscenity, it is certainly more impolite than it is immoral. It is for this reason, that the most corrupt nations are always the most scrupulous, and refined in their language and expressions. Was it ever perceived that the entertainments exhibited in fairs and market-places, had much effect on the minds of those young people who went to see them? This is expected only from the polished conversation of the stage; and it would be a great deal better for a young girl to see an hundred drolls at a fair, than to be once present at the representation of the Oracle.

Not but that I own, with regard to myself, that I should be glad we could do without even those drolls, and that all of us, great and small,

could learn to derive our pleasures and duties from ourselves and our station in life. But it does not follow that, because we ought to banish our mountebanks and puppet-shews, we should introduce a company of comedians. You have in your own country an example of the city of Marseilles having stood out long against the like innovation; opposing even the repeated orders of the ministry in its favour; hence plainly shewing it still preserved the memory, and breathed the spirit of its ancient liberty. What a striking instance is this to a city still in possession of its liberty!

Above all things, however, we should never think of forming an establishment of this kind in the way of essay, and with a view to its suppression when found to be attended with inconveniences: for these are not so easily removed as the object that gives rise to them. These effects will remain when the cause is no more; and indeed no sooner begin to be felt than they are already past remedy. When our taste and manners are once corrupted, they will not be so easily reformed; but our pleasures, our innocent pleasures, will lose their charms; the theatre will make us dislike them for ever. Avocation from business once become necessary, we shall not know how to fill up our vacant hours, which will render us burthensome to ourselves: the comedians will leave us in a state of listlessness, which will be a pledge of their return, and compel us to recall them, or to do still worse. We shall do ill to erect a theatre; we shall do ill in suffering it to subsist when erected; we shall do ill to pull it down again: in short, after the first error, do what we will, it must be wrong.

Must

Must there be, then, no public shews or entertainments in a republican state? There should be a great many. It was in republicks they were first instituted, and it is in them they are celebrated with the genuine air of festivity. What people does it more become to have frequent meetings, to engage in parties of pleasure and diversion, than those who have so many reasons for loving each other, and for continuing united? We have many of these festivals already, and I should be delighted if we had more. But let us not adopt those exclusive entertainments which keep a small number of people shut up in a gloomy cavern; there to sit for hours motionless, silent and inactive; within partitions, iron-spikes, and files of soldiery, the disagreeable badges of slavery and inequality. No, my happy countrymen, such are not your festivals! It is in the open air, in the face of heaven, you ought to meet and indulge yourselves, in the enjoyment of your own happiness. Your pleasures should be neither venal nor effeminate; unpoisoned by interest or constraint; but free and generous like ourselves, the sun should enliven your innocent spectacles with his meridian beams; while you yourselves would form one of the noblest sights they ever enlightened.

But what will be the objects exhibited at these spectacles? What will there be to be seen there? Nothing, if you will. Whenever liberty is to be found in the midst of plenty, there is the seat of human happiness. Raise a maypole with a chaplet of flowers, in the middle of a plain; call the people about it, and their assembly will become a festival. But
you

you may still do better ; the spectators themselves may be made actors ; they may be made to see, and reciprocally love themselves in each other ; to the end that all may be more intimately united. I need not refer to the games of ancient Greece, there are others more modern still subsisting, and which subsist even among us. We have our annual reviews ; public prizes ; and contests in firing small arms, in the management of artillery, and in the art of sailing ; in all which those who excel are crowned kings of the day. We cannot have too many institutions so useful * and agreeable ;

* It is not sufficient that the people find a subsistence suitable to their station. It is necessary they should live agreeably ; in order to enable them to discharge the duties of their station, and make them more contented with it ; by which the public order will be rendered more permanent. The probity of a people's morals depends, more than is generally imagined, on their being satisfied with their condition of life. Cabals and intrigues arise from the discontent and restlessness of individuals ; every thing going wrong when one person aspires after the state and employment of another. To act well in life, a man must be fond of his profession. The state is never properly established, till individuals being fixed in their place, their united force concurs to the general good, instead of being employed to the prejudice of particulars ; as must happen in every ill constituted government. What are we to think, then, of such governors as would deprive the people of all sports and amusements under the pretence that it diverts them from industry ? This maxim is barbarous as it is false. It is bad indeed, if people have no more time than is absolutely necessary

able; the number of such kings cannot hurt us. Why should we not take the same measures to render ourselves healthy and active, as we do to learn the exercise of arms? Doth the Republick stand in less need of artizans than soldiers? Why should we not adopt the plan of military rewards, and found other gymnastic prizes for running, wrestling, throwing quoits, and other bodily exercises? Why do not we animate our watermen to exert themselves for wagers on the lake? Can there possibly be a finer sight in the world, than to see some hundreds of boats, elegantly equipped, floating on that spacious bason, and setting off at a given signal, to seize a flag hoisted as a mark; and to be brought off by the victor in triumph, when he returns to claim the prize? All such kind of entertainments are no more expensive than people please to make them; while the concourse alone renders them suffi-

cessary for them to earn their bread. It is requisite they should have some to eat it in comfort, or they will not continue to earn it long. That just and beneficent Providence, which requires them to work, admits also of their having some diversion. Nature subjects them equally to exercise and repose, to pleasure and pain. An aversion to work hurts the labourer more than the work itself. If you would have people active and industrious, therefore, give them sport and amusements, which may reconcile them to their condition of life, and prevent their envying others in more easy circumstances. Some few days thrown away in this manner, will enhance the value of the rest. Only take care that their diversions are regular and decent; this is the way to animate them to industry.

ciently

ciently magnificent. It is necessary, however, to have been present at our exercises of this kind, to form an idea of the avidity which the Genevans seem to take in them. They appear to be no longer the same people: they are no more those methodical economists; those formal casuists that weigh even pleasantry itself in the balance of reason. Every one is chearful, gay and complacent; his heart is at these seasons to be read in his eyes, as it speaks at all others from his lips: he endeavours to communicate his satisfaction to every one he sees; inviting, pressing, and contending with him in the zeal of good-fellowship and civility. All the several companies form themselves into one, and every thing is made common among them. It is almost indifferent at what table you sit down, and the whole would be a compleat image of a Spartan entertainment, if it were not so profuse. Even this profusion itself, however, has its propriety; the aspect of abundance heightens that of liberty which produces it.

The winter, a season consecrated to the more private amusements of particular friends, is less adapted to public festivals. There is a kind of amusement, however, about which I could wish we had fewer scruples; - I mean that of balls for young marriageable people. For my part, I never could conceive why so many objections should be made to the practice of dancing, and the assemblies met for that purpose. Is there any more harm in dancing than in singing? Are not both amusements equally agreeable to the dictates of nature? And is it a crime for those who are destined to be united

united to each other, to divert themselves together by an innocent recreation? The sexes were formed for each other. Providence requires them to pursue the end for which they were created, and certainly the first and most sacred of all ties is that of marriage. All false religions counteract nature. There is none but ours, which obeys and regulates it, that enforces an institution really divine and suitable to mankind. Religion ought not to subject marriage to the embarrassments of civil institutions, to those restrictions which the gospel doth not prescribe, and which all good governments condemn. Now, pray, tell me where can young people have an opportunity of contracting an affection for each other, or of seeing each other with more decency and circumspection than in an assembly where the public eye is constantly upon them, and obliges them to the greatest modesty and reserve. Is it possible the Deity can be offended by an agreeable and salutary exercise, adapted to the spirit and vivacity of youth; wherein they learn to present themselves with grace and decency, and where the company has such a check on their behaviour, that they can hardly be a moment off their guard? Can we imagine a fairer way not to impose on each other, with regard to their persons at least; or to shew themselves in their true colours to those who are interested in knowing them well, before they lay themselves under an obligation to love them? Does not the duty of reciprocal endearment include that of giving mutual pleasure, and is it not an object worthy of two virtuous and christian-minded persons seeking to be united,
thus

thus to prepare their hearts for that reciprocal passion which the Deity enjoins them to entertain?

What is the consequence, on the other hand, in those places where the sexes are subjected to perpetual constraint; where the most innocent gaiety is looked upon as a crime; where the young people of different sexes dare not meet in publick, and where the imprudent austerity of the parson of the parish, induces him to preach up nothing in the name of God, but servile restraint, and irksome melancholy? The youth of both sexes are led to elude an insupportable tyranny, which both nature and reason disavow. Instead of those lawful pleasures, of which they are deprived, their giddiness and gaiety substitute others far more dangerous in their stead. Private meetings artfully contrived, supply the place of public assemblies; while the parties, by dint of concealing themselves, as if they were criminal, are tempted to become so. Innocent mirth loves to dissipate itself in open day; but vice is a friend to obscurity, and never did innocence and secrecy cohabit long together.

For my own part, I am so far from censuring such simple amusements, that I should be glad they had the sanction of public authority; and that, to prevent particular inconveniences, they were converted into solemn periodical assemblies, opened indiscriminately for the youth of both sexes. I should farther be glad that a magistrate * appointed by the Council, would
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* At the head of each company, body corporate, or public society, of which our state is composed, presides

condescend to preside at these assemblies. It would not be improper also that the parents of the young people were present, to have an eye over their children, and to be witnesses of their graceful deportment, and the applauses they may deserve; in which they would of course enjoy the greatest pleasure that can be given to an affectionate parent. I should be glad also that all married persons were admitted to such assemblies as spectators; though none should profane the conjugal dignity by dancing in publick: for to what honest purpose should they thus display themselves? I would have a convenient and respectable part of the Salloon railed off, for the accommodation of old persons of both sexes; who, after having furnished the state with citizens, might with pleasure see their grand-children preparing to become such. I would have no person go in or out, without paying obeysance to this honourable seat; and that every young couple, both before and after dancing, should make a profound reverence, in order to accustom themselves betimes to respect old age. I doubt not but this agreeable reunion of the two extremes of human life, would strike such an assembly in a most pathetic manner, and that tears of sympathy and joy would often start from the

presides one of these magistrates under the title of *Lord Commissioner*. They are present at all assemblies and festivals; nor does their presence lay any restraint on the decent familiarity subsisting among the individuals of the company.

eyes of those venerable spectators, capable of affecting equally the hearts of every person of the least sensibility present. I would have, farther, at the last assembly in the year, that the young lady, who had behaved herself, during the preceeding balls, with the greatest decorum and politest deportment, in the opinion of the venerable judges of the assembly, should be honoured with a crown by the hands of the *Lord Commissioner* *, and should be called the Queen of the ball during the ensuing year. At the close of the assembly, I would have her conducted home in ceremony, and her parents complimented on the excellent education given to their daughter. Lastly, I would have the magistrates make this Queen of the ball, if married during the year, a handsome present attended with some mark of public distinction, so that this honour might be an object of so serious a nature, as to be above ever becoming an object of ridicule.

It is certain, that in this case, there would be some reason to apprehend a partiality for personal charms, if the advanced age of the judges did not give room to think the preference might be given solely to merit: but were it so, where would be the harm if modest beauty should be sometimes partially favoured? Having more occasion to exert itself in its defence, does it not stand in need of greater encouragement? Is not beauty the gift of nature, as well as talents and industry? Where is the harm of its obtaining some of those honours,

* See the preceeding note.

which may excite it to deserve them, and may gratify self-love without giving offence to virtue?

By completing this plan with the same view, there might be given to these assemblies, under the notion of gallantry, and amusement, a very useful end; which would render them of great importance even as an object of police and morality. Young people having certain and decent places of meeting each other, they would be less tempted to go in search of others more uncertain and dangerous. In the mean while, both sexes would more patiently pursue those occupations and pleasures which are adapted to their station, and would be more easy under the temporary deprivation of each other's company. Private persons of all ranks would be indulged in the pleasure of a spectacle, that would be agreeable to all, but especially to parents. Mothers would take a pleasure in dressing up their daughters, which would also be an amusement to many other persons; and as this dress would be innocent and laudable in its design, it would be studied with propriety. These opportunities of meeting, with a view to a closer union, and forming settlements in life, would be frequently the means of reconciling divided families, and of cementing that harmony among individuals, which is so essential to a Republick. Without invading the prerogatives of parents, the inclinations of children would be a little more at liberty; the first choice would depend a little more on the heart; the agreement of age, disposition, taste, and character would be a little more consulted; and less influence would be afforded to rank and condition, which make matches very unhappy, when such circumstances are preferred to every other

other consideration. The means of getting acquainted becoming more easy, marriages would be more frequent; and these being less circumscribed, would prevent party divisions, would temper the excessive inequality of fortunes, and better keep up the spirit of the constitution among the body of the people. Under this regulation, our balls would not resemble public assemblies, but rather the meeting of one large family; while the peace, security and prosperity of the Republick would constantly find its source in the pleasure and amusement of its individuals †.

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† I amuse myself now and then in thinking what opinion people will have of me from my writings. On reading this letter they will say, *the man is mad for dancing*; but I am tired to death at a ball. *He cannot bear plays*; whereas I am passionately fond of them. *He has an aversion to women*; I am but too justifiable on this head. *He hates the players*. I have all the reason in the world to like them; having had an intimacy with one of that profession, that would have done honour to any man. They will pass a similar judgment on what I have said about the poets, whose plays I have been obliged to censure. *The dead do not hit my taste, and I have taken pique against the living*. But the real truth is, I am delighted with Racine, and I never failed, if I could help it, to see any of Moliere's comedies. If I have said less of Corneille, it is because not having seen many of his plays, and having no books at present by me, my memory does not enable me to cite him. With respect to the author of *Atræus* and *Cataline*, I never saw him but once, and then he conferred an obligation on me. I revere his genius and respect his years; but whatever honour I pay his person, I owe to his writings nothing but justice; and it is not for me to pay my debts at the expence of the

publick

It would be an easy matter, on these principles, with very little expence, and without inconvenience to the publick, to establish more amusements than we want, and to make our city a more agreeable place of residence even to foreigners ; who, finding nothing like it any

publick or of truth. If I appear at any time too free, it is entirely owing to the purity of my intentions, and to a disinterestedness which I have met with in few writers, and which still fewer possibly will chuse to imitate : I was never byassed by private views to swerve from my design of serving the publick ; with which view I was first induced to take up the pen ; having seldom, I may venture to say, written any thing but what was contrary to my own interest. *Vitam impendere vero.* Such is my motto, and I think I deserve it. I may impose on myself, reader, but I will not knowingly deceive you. You may be diffident of my abilities, but never distrust my sincerity. My zeal for the public good alone, induces me to address myself to the publick. In their behalf I forget every consideration respecting myself, and if an individual offends me, I am silent, lest personal resentment should render me unjust. This behaviour is of use to my enemies, who profit by it, and insult me at their ease, without running in danger of reprisals. It is of some use also to my readers, who need not fear my passions should impose on them ; it is farther particularly useful to myself, who, living at peace even with those who injure me, can only feel the evil I suffer, and not that which would result from resenting it. O pure and sacred truth, to whose altars I have consecrated the service of my days, never shall my passions pollute the sincere affection I have avowed for thee ! Never shall fear or self-interest divert the homage I delight to offer at thy shrine ! never shall my pen refuse thee ought, save what it would be afraid to yield to my revenge !

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where else, would resort hither to enjoy the singularity of the sight. To deal plainly, however, I have very good reasons for looking upon the concourse of strangers as an inconvenience rather than an advantage: being for my own part persuaded, that no foreigner ever set his foot in Geneva, who did not do us more harm than good.

But do you know, Sir, what kind of people we should endeavour to attract, and to keep within our walls? They are the natives of Geneva themselves, who, notwithstanding their real love for their country, are so fond of travelling, that they are found dispersed all the world over. One half of our citizens are scattered up and down in different parts, and live and die far from their native country; among which I might mention myself, were I a person less insignificant. I am not insensible that many of us are under the necessity of travelling in search of that subsistence, which it would be difficult for us to find on the spot: but should this our exile be perpetual? Let those, to whose industry heaven hath been propitious, return, like the bees, loaden with their spoils to their native hive: let them cause their fellow-citizens to rejoice at their good fortune; let them, by diffusing their wealth among their countrymen, excite the emulation of the rising generation; in fine, let them modestly enjoy at home the wealth, they may have honestly acquired abroad. But what is likely to induce them to return? Is it a theatre? Our playhouse must necessarily fall short of many others: and would they forsake the theatrical entertainments of London and Paris, for the sake of seeing those of Geneva? No, Sir, such an

expedient would be no inducement to the desired end. To produce this effect, indeed, every man should be made sensible of the impossibility of finding in foreign countries, what he hath left behind him in his own: there ought to be an irresistible attraction also to invite him back to the place he ought perhaps never to have quitted: the pleasing remembrance of his youthful exercises, his entertainments, his pleasures, ought to be deeply imprinted on his heart. These agreeable impressions ought to grow stronger as men advance in years, when a thousand other ideas are effaced. They should hear, amidst the gloomy grandeur and magnificence of great states, a secret voice whispering from the inmost recesses of their hearts, "Where, alas! are the sports and amusements of my youth? Where is the harmony of my fellow citizens? Where is their fraternal affection for each other? Where is their purity of mirth and real joy? Where are peace, liberty, justice and innocence? Let us go immediately in search of those inestimable blessings." Good God! whence comes it that, with the heart of a German, with so pleasant a city, so delightful a country, so just a government, with such actual pleasures, and every thing necessary to give them a relish; whence is it, I say, that every individual of us doth not love and revere his country!

Thus did the inhabitants of Sparta, whose example I cannot cite too often as a rule for our own conduct, recall their fellow-citizens to their native country by modest festivals and simple amusements. Hence, even at Athens, in the centre of the polite arts; and at Susa, in the midst of indolence and luxury, did the dis-

gusted Lacedemonian regret the ruder entertainments and toilsome exercises of Sparta. It was there, that pleasure and amusement resided in the midst of continual labour: there the severest toils passed for mere recreation, while the slightest entertainments were ever attended with some instructive moral. It was at Sparta that the citizens continually assembled, devoted their whole lives to diversions, which engaged the attention of the state, and to sports which were never interrupted but in time of war.

But I already hear the witlings begin their raillery. They ask me whether, after so many marvellous instructions, I would not also recommend the introduction of the naked dances of the Spartan lasses, among our Genevan amusements? I answer, that I should be very glad if our eyes and hearts were chaste enough to bear such an exhibition; and that the young women would in such a situation be protected at Geneva by the public modesty, as they were at Sparta.

But, with all the esteem I have for my countrymen, I am very sensible of the wide difference there is between them and the Spartans. It is for this reason I propose no institutions of the latter, but those which are adapted to our situation and capacity.

As Plutarch has undertaken to justify the abovementioned custom, there is no need for me to meddle with it after him. It must be admitted, however, that this custom was adapted only to the disciples of a Lycurgus; that their frugal and laborious life, their purity and austerity of manners, and their peculiar strength of mind, could alone render innocent

accident to them, a sight so shocking to the modesty of every nation that made pretensions to it.

But can it be thought that the artful dress of our women, is not in the main as dangerous as absolute nakedness; the first effects of which would by habit be turned into indifference, and perhaps into disgust. It is well known, that statues and pictures never offend, except when part of the body is covered; which covering renders the nudities obscene. The direct power of the senses is little and confined; it is the imagination that renders them capable of doing so much mischief: it is this which enflames the desires, by representing things more charming than they really are: it is this which occasions the eye to be offended at naked objects, from the notion that they ought to be clothed.

There is no dress, though ever so modest, through which the eye, when assisted by the imagination, will not penetrate. A young female Chinese would ravish more hearts at Peking, only by displaying the tip of her shoe, than the finest girl in the universe, dancing naked on the banks of Taygetus. But when women attire themselves with such apparent carelessness and real art, as is at present the custom; when they shew a little only to make us wish for more; when the obstacle opposed to the sight is designed only to inflame the imagination; when they conceal only part of the object, the better to set off that which is exposed,

Heu! male tum mites defendit pampinus uvas.

Let us here finish these numerous digressions. This, thank Heaven, is the last, and I come to the conclusion of my epistle. I mentioned

the festivals of the Spartans as a model of those, I would recommend to my fellow-citizens. It was not their object only but their simplicity also that engaged my approbation. They had no pomp, no parade, no luxury: a secret charm of patriotism rendered them pleasing, and they breathed a kind of military spirit becoming a free people *. The Lacedemonians, engaged

* I remember to have been much struck with a very simple sight, in my infancy, which has been strongly impressed on my memory ever since; notwithstanding the distance of time and the multiplicity of objects that have intervened. The regiment of St. Gervais having performed their exercise, they sat down as usual to supper in companies: after which most of the regiment met in the square of St. Gervais, and went to dancing, officers and soldiers all together, round the fountain; on the basin of which were placed drums, fifes, and men with lighted flambeaux. After people have been exhilarated by feasting, their dancing does not exhibit any thing very engaging; and yet the concerted motion of five or six hundred men dressed in uniform, holding one another by the hands, and forming a long train, which winded in cadence and without confusion, through numberless tunes, returns and figured evolutions; the songs that animated them, the noise of the drums, the light of the torches, and a certain military apparatus amidst a scene of pleasure; all this together, I say, formed a most agreeable sight; which it was impossible not to be affected with. As it was late, the women were gone to bed; but they soon got up, and the windows were soon full of female spectators, who inspired the actors with fresh spirit: but they could not confine themselves long to their windows. They came down into the square; the wives flocked to their husbands; the servants brought wine, and the

engaged neither in business nor pleasure, or at least what we should denominate such, passed the day in a pleasing uniformity, without find-

the children, awakened by the noise, came running half naked to their parents. The dance was of course stopped; and now nothing passed but embracing, laughing, health and caresses. There resulted from all this such an universal rapture, which cannot be described; but which in times of general joy one naturally feels, from being surrounded by every thing that is dear and valuable. My father, I remember, embraced me with a palpitation of heart, which I think I feel and share with him still. "John," said he, "love thy country. Behold thy honest countrymen; they are all friends and brothers; joy and unanimity reign in their hearts. Thou art a Genevan. Some time or other thou wilt see other people: but when thou hast travelled as much as thy father, thou wilt still say, thou didst never see their fellows."

They would now have returned to dancing; but it was impossible: they hardly knew what they were about, their heads being affected by an intoxication far more pleasing than that of wine. After staying some time longer therefore, laughing and chatting in the square, they were obliged to separate; each retiring quietly with his family. Thus did those amiable and prudent women bring home their husbands, not by disturbing, but by partaking of their pleasures. I am sensible that this sight, which so much affected me, would have had no charms for many others. One must have eyes peculiarly adapted to see it, and a heart to feel it. No, there is no genuine joy in society, but that of the whole community; and the true sentiments of nature are felt only by the common people. Dignity! thou daughter of pride and mother of care! did ever thy gloomy slaves enjoy one moment in their whole lives, like this I have been describing!

ing it too long, and their whole life in the same, without finding it too short. They returned home every evening gay and good humoured, to take their frugal repast, content with their country, their fellow-citizens and themselves. If you want a sample of these public diversions, I will give you one mentioned by Plutarch. There were, says he, three companies of dancers, according to the three several ages of nature; and each company constituted a chorus to the dance. The old men began the first, singing the following couplet.

We were once, tho' now we're old,
Valiant, hardy, young and bold.

The company of young men followed next, and sung in their turn; clashing their arms in cadence.

We are bold and hardy now,
And defiance dare avow.

Afterwards came that of the children, who answered them, singing as loud as they could.

Now tho' feeble striplings, we
Soon shall bold and hardier be.

Such, Sir, are the entertainments best adapted to republican governments. With respect to that of a theatre, on which your article of Geneva hath obliged me to expatiate in this epistle; I foresee that, if ever private interest should establish it within our walls, it will be attended with the most fatal effects. Some of these I have mentioned, and could point out many more; but it might be betraying too great an apprehension of imaginary evils, which

which the prudence and vigilance of our magistrates know how to prevent. I do not take upon me therefore to instruct those who are wiser than myself. It is sufficient for me, if I have said enough to console the youthful part of my countrymen, for the want of an amusement which may prove so prejudicial to their country. I admonish those fortunate youths to profit by the advice, with which you have concluded your article. May they be sensible of their lot and deserve it! May they be able to perceive how far solid happiness is preferable to those idle pleasures which are in the end destructive of it! And may they transmit to their posterity the virtues, the liberty and the peace, which they have received as an inheritance from their forefathers! With this last wish I conclude the present writing; and with this shall conclude my life.

AN
EXPOSTULATORY
L E T T E R
FROM
J. J. ROUSSEAU,
Citizen of GENEVA,
TO
CHRISTOPHER de BEAUMONT,
Archbishop of Paris.
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
The MANDATE of the said Prelate,
AND ALSO
The Proceedings of the Parliament of Paris,
relative to the New Treatise on Education,
intituled EMILIUS.

*Da veniam si quid liberior dixi, non ad contumeliam tuam, sed ad
defensionem meam. Præsumpsi enim de gravitate et prudentiâ
tuâ, quia potes considerare quantam mihi respondendi necessitatem
imposueris.*

AUG. Epist. 238. ad PASCENT.

EXPOSITORY
LETTER
FROM
J. J. ROUSSEAU

CHURCH OF ENGLAND
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
THE MANDATE OF THE
BISHOP OF DORSET
AND
THE BISHOP OF
DORSET

Printed by J. J. ROUSSEAU
at the Press of J. J. ROUSSEAU
in the City of London

PROCEEDINGS

IN THE

PARLIAMENT of PARIS.

ENTERED, this day, the officers of our Lord the King; M. Omer-Joly de Fleury, advocate of our said Lord the King, presenting an information to the court, against a work intitled *Emilius*, &c. by J. J. Rousseau, citizen of Geneva; in words, and to the effect following:

That the said work appears to be composed only with a view to re-establish natural religion; the author labouring, in the plan of education he affects to pursue with his pupil, to illustrate and recommend that criminal system.

That the author affects to instruct his said pupil according to nature, which he makes his only guide in the formation of his moral man; that he regards all religions as equally salutary, and as having all their peculiar reasons in the climate, government, genius of the people, or other local cause, which makes the one preferable to another only according to the circumstances of time and place.

That he would have man confine himself to that kind of knowlege which instinct alone prompts him to pursue; pretending that the passions are the principal instruments of our preservation, and asserting that men may be saved without believing in God, on the supposition of an invincible ignorance, which he maintains some persons may lie under with regard to the Deity, and which will excuse their unbelief. That according to the principles of this writer, we should be directed in the choice of a religion by reason only; by the dictates of which we should also leave the mode of that worship which mankind are to pay to the Supreme Being; whom the author affects to honour, in speaking with impiety of those external ceremonies of religion, which that Being hath established, or the church hath prescribed, under the direction and influence of his holy Spirit.

That, in consequence of this system of admitting no other than natural religion, whatever form it assume among different people, he hath endeavoured to disprove the truth of the holy scriptures and prophecies, the certainty of the miracles contained in the sacred writings, the infallibility of revelation, and the authority of the church: that, in recurring on every occasion to this natural religion, he undertakes to justify not only all religions indiscriminately, pretending that salvation may be found in all, but even the infidelity and scepticism of all those, whom we may in vain endeavour to convince of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the truth of the Christian religion; which alone hath God for its author; and with regard to
which

which he carries his blasphemy so far, as to treat it as ridiculous and contradictory, and to inculcate a sacrilegious indifference for its mysteries and tenets; all which he endeavours to destroy.

That such are the impious and detestable principles which the writer proposes to establish in his said treatise; throughout which he subjects religion to the examination of reason, which can establish only mere human creeds, and which admits of no other truths, or dogmas in religion, than such as it may please the understanding, left to its own light, or rather its own darkness, to receive or reject.

That to these impieties, the author hath added many indecent details and illustrations directly contrary to modesty and decorum, as well as pretensions tending odiously and falsely to mis-represent the sovereign authority; to destroy the principles of that obedience which is due to it, and to lessen the respect and affection of the subjects for their kings.

That the informants conceive these instances sufficient to give the court an idea of the work in question: that the maxims which are scattered throughout, unite to form a chimerical system, as impracticable in the execution, as absurd and criminal in its design: that subjects educated in such maxims could not fail of being prejudiced in favour of scepticism and toleration, of being abandoned to their passions, and devoted to the pleasures of sense; of becoming deaf to every thing but the voice of nature, and of substituting instead of the noble desire of true glory, this pernicious phrenzy of singularity.

gularity. What rules for the formation of manners ! What members of church and state must such children prove who are educated in principles that are equally shocking to the citizen and Christian !

That the author of the said book, not having scrupled to set his name to the work, cannot be too expeditiously prosecuted ; for that it is of importance, since he is known, that justice should make an example as well of the writer, as of those who may be discovered to have assisted, either in the printing or distributing a work that deserves, together with its author and publisher, to be treated with the greatest severity.

That such is the substance of the written information, now left with a copy of the book, in court. On this the officers retired.

The matter of the said information having been taken into consideration, it is resolved by the court, that the said printed book, entitled *Emilius*, &c. be torn to pieces and burnt, in the court of the palace, at the foot of the grand stairs, by the common executioner. All persons possessed of copies of the said book, are also enjoined to bring them to the register of the court, in order to have them suppressed. And all booksellers are expressly forbidden to print, sell or publish the said book ; as are also all hawkers and others, either to vend or distribute the same, under pain of being immediately prosecuted to the utmost severity of the law. It is also ordered by the court, at the request of the King's Attorney General, that information be taken before the reporting counsel, of all such writers as may be found in
Paris,

PARLIAMENT OF PARIS. 207

Paris, and before the lieutenants-criminal of their respective bailiwicks, of all such as may offer, without the said city, to give evidence against the author, printers, or venders of the said book. That the said information when taken, be communicated to the King's Attorney-General; to be proceeded on as he shall judge proper, or the court order relating thereto. It is further ordered, that the said J. J. Rousseau, mentioned in the title page of the said book, be in the mean time apprehended, taken, and committed to the prisons of the Conciergerie of the palace, in order to be heard and interrogated before the said reporting counsel, touching the matter of the said book; and to answer to the information which the Attorney-General hath taken against him: and in case the said J. J. Rousseau cannot be apprehended and taken, on search after his person, for fourteen days, that his effects be seized, and an inventory thereof be taken, and lodged in the hands of the commissaries appointed for that purpose; till the said Rousseau shall appear agreeable to this order. And to these purposes it is ordered, that a copy of the said book be left with the register of this court, to serve for the instructions relative to the process. Ordered, lastly, that the present arret be printed, published, and stuck up wherever it may be thought requisite. Done in parliament, June 9, 1762.

Signed, Du Franc.

On Friday the 11th of June 1762, the above-mentioned book was torn to pieces, and burned.

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burned at the foot of the great stair-case of the palace, by the public executioner, in the presence of me Etienne Dagobert Ysabeau, one of the three principal commissaries of the great chamber, assisted by the two serjeants of the court.

Signed Ysabeau.

On Friday the 17th of June 1793, the above-mentioned book was torn to pieces and burned.

THE
M A N D A T E
OF THE
ARCHBISHOP of PARIS;

*Condemning the New Treatise on Education, entitled
Emilius, &c. by J. J. Rousseau, citizen of
Geneva.*

Christopher de Beaumont, by the grace of
God and by favour of the holy apostolic
see, archbishop of Paris, duke of St. Cloud,
peer of France, commander of the order of
the Holy Ghost, patron of the Sorbonne, &c.
To all the faithful of our diocese, health and
benediction.

St. Paul, my dear brethren, hath foretold
that perilous times should come, in which men
should be lovers of themselves, proud, blasphem-
ers, unholy, false accusers, high minded,
lovers of pleasures more than of God, men of
corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith*.
And in what times hath this prediction been
more literally fulfilled than in the present! In-
fidelity, encouraged by the passions, presents

* 2 Tim. chap. iii. v. 1, 4, 8.

itself in every shape, in order to accommodate itself in some measure to persons of all ages, characters and conditions of life. Sometimes, in order to insinuate itself into the minds of those who are captivated with trifles, it assumes a light, agreeable and frivolous stile; hence we see a numerous tribe of romances, equally impious and obscene, whose sole end is to divert the imagination, with a view to seduce the understanding and to corrupt the heart. Sometimes, assuming an air of sublimity, it affects to recur to the first principles of human knowledge, and pretends to deduce from thence authority for casting off a yoke said to be disgraceful to humanity, even that of divinity itself. Sometimes it furiously declaims against religious zeal, and in a rage preaches up universal toleration. And again, sometimes, uniting all the different modes of language, it mingles gravity with mirth, the maxims of purity with those of charity, truth with error, and religion with blasphemy; endeavouring, in a word, to reconcile light with darkness, and Christ with Belial. This, my dear brethren, appears in a particular manner the object of a recent publication, entitled *Emilius, &c.* A writer hath here started up, who, educated in the midst of error, is full of the language of philosophy, though no true philosopher: possessed of a multiplicity of knowledge, which nevertheless hath not served to enlighten his understanding, he hath made use of it to darken the understanding of others; he is given up to paradoxes both in opinion and practice, uniting simplicity of manners with ostentation of doctrine, a zeal for ancient maxims with a passion for establishing the most singular novelties, the ob-

obscurity of retirement with a desire of being known to the whole world. We have seen his invectives against those very sciences which he himself cultivated: we hear him acknowledge the excellence of the gospel, while he is endeavouring to depreciate its tenets; and see him describing the beauty of virtue, at the same time that he is striving to extinguish the love of it in the hearts of his readers. He hath assumed the preceptorship of human kind, in order to deceive them; he hath erected himself into a public monitor, to lead the world astray; and hath played the oracle of the age, in order to compleat its destruction. In a former treatise, on the Inequality of mankind, he hath reduced man to a level with the brutes; in another production still more recent he hath insinuated all the poison of inordinate pleasure, under pretence of prohibiting it: and in the present he takes advantage of the earliest moments of life, to establish in the mind of man the maxims of irreligion and infidelity.

What a horrid enterprize! my dear brethren! The education of youth is one of the most important objects of the zeal and solicitude of the pastors of the church. We are sensible that, in order to reform the world, as far as the weakness and corruption of our nature will permit, it would be sufficient to observe, under the direction and impressions of grace, the dawns of human reason, and to direct it in the way that leads to all truth. By such means, the mind as yet exempt from prejudice, may be put for ever on its guard against error; and the heart as yet a stranger to the violent passions, may receive impressions of every virtue. But to whom doth it more properly belong, than to

us and our fellow labourers in the ministry, thus to watch over the early progress of christian youth; to furnish them with the spiritual milk of the word, so that they may grow in grace*; to prepare them betimes, by salutary exhortations, to be sincere worshippers of the true God, faithful subjects to their king, and men worthy to become the support and ornament of their country.

Now the author of *Emilius*, my dear brethren, hath laid down a plan of education, which, so far from being consistent with christianity, is not even calculated to form either good citizens or good men. Under the vain pretence of restoring man to himself, and educating his pupil agreeable to nature, he assumes as a maxim, an assertion contradictory not only to the doctrines of religion, but also to the experience of all ages and nations, "We lay it down, says he, as an incontestible maxim, that the first emotions of nature are always right; and that there is no original perversity in the human heart." How contradictory is this to the doctrines of the holy scripture and the church, respecting the change made in our nature by the fall! In this maxim, we lose sight of that divine ray, which discovers to us the mystery of our own hearts. Yes, my dear brethren, we find within us a striking mixture of greatness and meanness, of a passion for truth and a love of error, of an inclination to virtue and a tendency to vice: an astonishing contrast, which, disconcerting the pagan philosophers, left them to blunder on in vain speculations! A contrast, of which re-

* 1 Pet. chap. ii. v. 2.

velation discloses the source, in the deplorable disobedience of our first parents! In consequence of their defection it is, that man finds himself drawn by a fatal tendency to vice; and how is he to resist and stand against it if his infancy be not conducted by preceptors, replete with attention, virtue, and prudence; and if, during the whole course of his life, he doth not, under the protection, and by the grace of God, make continual and forcible efforts against it? Alas! my dear brethren, in spite of the most careful and virtuous education, in spite of the most encouraging promises and dreadful menaces of religion, the failings of youth are still too frequent, too numerous! Into what errors, into what excesses, do they not, when left alone, precipitate themselves? The torrent breaks in upon them, in spite of the strongest mounds that may be thrown up to oppose it: what would be the case, then, if no obstacle were raised to break its efforts and divert its force?

The author of *Emilius*, who professes to be of no religion, points out the way, nevertheless, without designing it, which leads infallibly to true religion. "How shall we, says he, who, on all occasions, pretend to cast off the yoke of authority; we who pay no regard to opinion; who would teach our pupil nothing but what he might have learnt himself, in any country; in what religion shall we educate Emilius? To what sect shall we unite the man of nature? The answer appears to me very simple; we shall unite him neither to one nor another, but place him in a proper situation, and qualify him to make choice of that
which

which the best use of his reason may induce him to adopt."

Would to God, my dear brethren, this object had been attained! Had the author really qualified his pupil to make choice of that religion, which the best use of his reason would have induced him to adopt, he would infallibly have prepared him for receiving the doctrines of Christianity. For certain it is, my dear brethren, that the light of nature conducts to the light of the gospel; and the duty of a Christian is indeed a *reasonable* service*. In fact, if the best use of our reason does not lead us to the Christian revelation, our faith is vain, and our hope of none effect. But, in what manner, you may say, doth the best use of our reason, conduct us to the inestimable blessing of faith, and from thence to the precious assurance of salvation? It is to reason itself, that we may safely appeal. If we acknowledge a God, our great concern is next to know whether he hath condescended to speak to mankind, in another manner than by the works of nature. To determine this, we must examine if the evidence of the facts, on which revelation is founded, be not superior to all the efforts of the most artful chicanery.

Infidelity hath often attempted to invalidate the evidence of these facts, and as often hath been convinced of its impotence. God hath borne witness of himself in the holy scriptures, and this testimony is most worthy of belief. What remains, therefore, for a man who makes the best use of his reason, but to acquiesce in

* Rom. xii. 1.

this testimony? It is thy grace, O Lord! which compleats this work of illumination; it is that which determines the will, which forms the heart of the Christian; but it is the display of its evidence, and the force of its motives, that previously employ and purify the understanding; and in this work, not less noble than indispensable, consists that best use of our reason, which the author of *Emilius* undertakes to speak of, without having any fixed or certain idea concerning it.

In order that a youth should possess the requisite docility to receive his tutor's instructions, this author would have him be destitute of every principle of religion. His reason for which extraordinary document is this. "To know good from evil, and to be sensible of the duties of a man, is not the province of a child.—I should as soon, adds he, require a child to be five feet high, as to have judgment at ten years of age." Doubtless, my dear brethren, the human understanding hath its progress, and is improved by degrees; but doth it thence follow, that a child at ten years of age, should not know the difference between good and evil; that he should confound prudence with folly, good nature with cruelty, and virtue with vice? May he not be sensible at that age, that obedience to his parents is a virtue and disobedience a vice? To assert he is not, my dear brethren, is to calumniate human nature, in supposing it capable of a degree of stupidity, to which it is a stranger. "Every child who believes in God, says this author, is an idolater or an anthropomorphite." But, if it be an idolater, it must believe in many gods, and attribute the divine nature to insensible images. If it be
only

only an anthropomorphite, it invests the true God with a corporeal form. Now we can suppose neither the one nor the other of a child who is educated a Christian. Its education may possibly be deficient in this particular; but it is highly unjust to impute that to religion, which is only owing to the defects of instruction. Add to this, that it cannot be expected a boy of ten years of age should be a philosopher; hence, though he may be well taught, he may but ill explain himself; but, when we teach him that the Deity is of a different nature from objects of sense; that, possessed of infinite intelligence, and supreme power, it executes whatever it pleases, we certainly give him such a notion of God, as is adapted to his understanding. It is not to be doubted that an atheist might easily perplex and confound such a young believer with his artful sophisms: but not all his address can make it appear that, when a child so instructed, believes in God, he is nothing more than an idolater or anthropomorphite; that is to say, that he believes only in the existence of a chimera.

But this author, my dear brethren, goes still farther, and denies that even a young man of fifteen is capacitated to believe in God. Man at that age, therefore, must be supposed not to know whether there is a God or not; it is in vain the works of nature display the glory of their Creator, he understands not their expressive language. It must be supposed that he exists without knowing to whom he owes existence; and that reason itself contributes to involve him in this ignorance and darkness. It is thus, my dear brethren, that blind impiety endeavours to darken, with the clouds

of obscurity, the torch which religion presents to mankind in every period of human life. St. Augustine reasoned justly on other principles, when, in speaking of his early years, he said, "I fell, at that time, Lord, into the hands of those, who are careful to call on thy name; and comprehended by their discourses concerning thee, and agreeable to the capacity of my tender years, that thou wert something great, and that, although invisible, and removed beyond the reach of our senses, thou couldst hear our prayers and relieve us. Hence I began, from my very infancy, to address thee by prayer, and to regard thee as my protector and my support; the earliest employment of my tongue being to call on thy holy name*."

Let us go on, my dear brethren, to the farther unaccountable paradoxes of the author of *Emilius*. Let us see whether, after having reduced young persons to such a state of profound ignorance with respect to the attributes of the Deity, he will admit them to know more of themselves? Do they know whether they are possessed of a soul distinct from the body? Or do they look on themselves as beings purely material and subject to the laws of mechanism? The author of *Emilius* doubts whether it be time to teach a pupil even of eighteen years of age, that he hath a soul; pretending that "if he learns it sooner he runs a risk of never knowing it so long as he lives:" but will he not admit, that youth may be sensible of their moral duties? No. If we believe our author, "There are none but physical objects, that will interest children, particularly those whose vanity is not yet

* Lib. I. Confess. chap. ix.

excited, and that are not corrupted by the poison of prejudice.

Agreeable to these notions, he would have all the pains we take in the earlier part of education confined to what is material and terrestrial in man. Exercise, says he, their bodies, their organs, their natural forces; but keep the soul as inactive as possible.

This mental indolence and inactivity appears to him necessary, in order to dispose the mind to receive those errors he means to inculcate. But to think of instructing mankind in wisdom, at a season when their growing passions are most prevalent, is to inculcate it in a manner which the author himself explodes.

How opposite, my dear brethren, is such a mode of education as this, to that which right reason and true religion unitedly dictate! These require that a prudent and vigilant preceptor should be on the watch, as it were, to discover in the pupil, the first dawnings of intelligence, in order to captivate the understanding with the beauty of truth; and for the first emotions of the heart, in order to engage it by the charms of virtue. How much better is it, in fact, to prevent obstacles, than to leave them to be surmounted? How much is it to be feared, if the impressions of vice should precede the precepts of virtue, that men, when arrived at a certain age, will want both courage and will to resist vicious allurements? Doth not happy experience daily demonstrate, that persons, educated in virtuous principles, recovering from the irregularities of an ill-spent youth, return at last to the salutary practice of those maxims they were taught in their childhood?

We need not however be surprized, my dear brethren,

brethren, that this author defers so long the knowledge of the existence of a Deity, when he doth not believe it necessary to salvation. "It is clear, (says he, in the character of an imaginary personage) that a man may, under some circumstances, live to grow old without believing in God, and yet he would not, for that reason, be deprived of his presence in the other world, if his unbelief was involuntary."

Observe, my dear brethren, the author doth not mean here a person who is incapable of the use of reason, but merely one whose reason might have received no assistance from information. Now such a pretence is absurd, particularly on the system of this writer, who affirms human reason to be absolutely perfect. Saint Paul indeed assures us that, among the Pagan philosophers, many had, by the force of reason alone, arrived at the knowledge of the true God. "That which may be known of God, saith the apostle, is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools *."

Now, if such was the crime of these men, who, being subjected by the prejudices of their education to the worship of idols, yet did not

* Rom. i. 19.

fail to attain to the knowledge of the true God ; how can those, who have no such obstacles to surmount, be so innocent and blameless, as to merit the enjoyment of the presence of God in another life ? how can they be excusable (possessed of right reason as our author supposes) in having contemplated during this life, the magnificent prospect of the universe, and yet remain ignorant of its creator, preserver and governor ?

The same writer, my dear brethren, takes openly the side of scepticism with regard to creation and to the unity of God. Thus he makes the same imaginary personage say, " I believe that the world is governed by a wise and powerful Will. I see it, or rather I feel it, and this is of importance for me to know : but is the world eternal, or is it created ? Are things derived from one self-sufficient principle, or are there two or more ? And what is their essence ? Of all this I know nothing, nor do I see that it is of any consequence I should.—I give up all such idle disquisitions, which serve only to make me discontented with myself, are useless in practice, and superior to my understanding." What is it this daring author means to say ? He believes the world to be governed by a wise and powerful will ; he confesses it is of importance to him to know this ; and yet he knows not, he says, whether things are derived from one self-existent principle or from many ; and he pretends it is of little consequence whether he do h or no. If there be really a wise and powerful Being who governs the world, is it conceivable that he should not be the sole principle, the efficient cause of all things ? And can it be more important to know one than the other ? What

a contradiction ! He knows nothing of the nature of God, and yet presently after he acknowledges this Supreme Being to be possessed of intelligence, power, will, and goodness ; is not this to have an idea of the divine nature ? The unity of God appears to him a futile and indeterminate question ; as if the notion of a multiplicity of gods were not the greatest of all absurdities. *The plurality of Gods*, says Tertullian very expressively, tends to the *nullity of God*. To admit a God, is to admit a supreme and independent Being, to which all other beings are subordinate. This writer insinuates, therefore, that there are many gods.

It is not surprising, my dear brethren, that a man who gives into such errors respecting the Deity, should stand up to oppose the religion he hath revealed. According to this author, all revelations in general debase the Deity, in ascribing to him human passions. “ So far from giving us enlightened notions of the Supreme Being, their particular tenets, in my opinion, give us the most obscure and confused ideas. To the inconceivable mysteries by which the Deity is hid from our view, they add the most absurd contradictions.”

We may, with much greater justice, my dear brethren, reproach this author with inconsistency and absurdity. It is he who degrades the Deity, who confounds and debases our notions of that great being, by directly disputing his essence, and questioning his unity.

He is sensible that the truth of the Christian revelation is proved by facts ; but concerning the miracles, constituting the principal evidence of that revelation, he cries out, “ Who were

witnesses to these miracles? — Men — Always human testimony? It is always men that tell me what other men have told them. What a number of these are constantly between me and the Deity!" To justify this complaint, my dear brethren, we ought to be able to affirm that a revelation must be false, when it is not made to every individual; we ought to be able to say, "God cannot require us to believe any thing he hath said, unless he had particularly addressed himself to us." But are there not an infinite number of facts, even prior to that of the Christian revelation, of which it would be absurd to doubt? Now by what means do we acquire the knowledge of these facts but by human testimony? By what other means did our author himself become acquainted with Sparta, with Athens, and with Rome, on whose laws, manners, and heroes he lavishes such extravagant encomiums? What a number of men there must have been between him and the events which relate to the origin and catastrophe of those antient republics! What a number of men between him and even the historians that have transmitted to us an account of those events! The scepticism of our author, therefore, with regard to this particular, is evidently founded on nothing but his own infidelity.

"What, if a man (says he, a little farther) should come and harangue us in the following manner: *I come, ye mortals, to announce to you the will of the Most High; acknowledge in my voice that of him who sent me. I command the sun to move backwards, the stars to change their places, the mountains to disappear, the waves to remain fixed on high, and the earth to wear a different aspect. Who would not, at the sight of such miracles,*
immediately

immediately attribute them to the Author of nature?" Who would not think, my dear brethren, that a writer who speaks in this manner, wanted only to be witness to a miracle, to become a Christian? But hear what he says farther: "The most important examination, after all, remains to be made into the doctrines delivered. — After proving the truth of the doctrine by the miracle, you are reduced to prove the truth of the miracle by that of the doctrine. — Now, what is to be done in this case? There is but one step to be taken, to recur to reason, and leave miracles to themselves: better indeed had it been never to have had recourse to them." That is, my dear brethren, as much as to say, "Shew me a miracle, and I will believe; and yet, when you have shewn me a miracle, I will not believe." What inconsistency and absurdity! But it is well known, that, in the affair of miracles, we do not admit that sophistry, with which the author of this treatise reproaches us.

When the doctrine is acknowledged to be divine, and to be founded on the truth of positive revelation, we make use of it, indeed, to judge of the miracles; that is, to reject the pretended prodigies which impostors may set up against such doctrine. When the point in question is an entire new doctrine, which is said to be dictated by the spirit of God, miracles are produced as proofs of it: that is to say, the person who assumes the character of a missionary from the Most High, confirms his mission and the doctrines he preaches by miracles, which are the testimony of God himself. Thus the doctrine and the miracles are made use of respectively, according to the different points of view, in

which they are placed, in the study or illustration of religion. But in this there is no abuse of argument, ridiculous sophistry, or absurd reasoning in a circle, as hath been frequently demonstrated by those who have undertaken to obviate this trite objection. Nor is it probable that the author of *Emilius* should be ignorant of these demonstrations: but according to the plan he hath pursued, of throwing obscurity on all revealed religion and supernatural operations, he maliciously imputes to us such arguments as are disgraceful to reason. Thus he represents us as enthusiasts, whom a false and blinded zeal urges on to prove two principles, one by the other, without any diversity in the state of the question or method. Where, my good brethren, is that philosophical candour, that sincerity, of which this writer makes so great a boast?

Will it be believed, that, after having taken the greatest pains to invalidate the human testimony of the christian revelation, the same author should pay it the most solemn and positive deference imaginable? To convince you, however, of his strange inconsistency, and at the same time to serve for your edification, my dear brethren, I shall cite the passages wherein he hath done this, in the plainest terms. "I will confess to you, says he, that the majesty of the scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers with all their pomp of diction; how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the scriptures! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred Personage, whose history it contains, should be him-
self

self a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast, or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manners! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery? What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtilty, what truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where is the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation?—Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which no body presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ.—It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the gospel; the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more surprising character than the hero of it.”

It would be difficult, my dear brethren, to express a more explicit homage to the authenticity of the Gospel: And yet the author acknowledges it only in consequence of human testimony. It is always men, that report what other men have reported. What a number of men between God and him! Nothing can be more evident than that the writer here contradicts himself, and is confuted, on his own principle. How strangely infatuated therefore

is this author, to add, "And yet, with all this, the same Gospel abounds with incredible relations, with circumstances repugnant to reason, and which it is impossible for a man of sense either to conceive or admit. What is to be done amidst all these contradictions? be modest and circumspect: regard in silence what cannot be either disproved or comprehended, and humbly thyself before the Supreme Being, who only knows the truth. Such is the involuntary scepticism in which I remain." But can this scepticism, my dear brethren, be indeed involuntary, when he refuses to admit the doctrines of a book, which, by his own confession, cannot be the work of man? when this book bears the marks of truth, so striking, so great, and so inimitable, that the inventor would be more astonishing than the hero of it? Surely we may here safely say that iniquity hath belied itself.

It appears, my dear brethren, that this author hath rejected revelation, only to adopt natural religion. "What God requires us to do, says he, he doth not tell us from the mouths of others; but inscribes it in the bottom of our hearts." But hath not God written in our hearts the obligation of believing in him, when we are convinced that it is he who hath spoken? Now what certitude have we not that the Scriptures are the word of God? The actions of Socrates, of which no one hath the least doubt, are, by the confession of this author himself, not so well attested as those of Jesus Christ. Natural religion, therefore, itself, directs us to receive that which is revealed. But it is not certain that this author really admits of natural religion; at least he doth not acknowledge its necessity. No, my dear brethren, "If I am mistaken,
say

says he, it is without design. This is sufficient to prevent my errors from being imputed to me as a crime. And though you should be mistaken in the same manner, it is of very little consequence." That is to say, it is sufficient, according to this writer, to be persuaded you are in possession of the truth, in order that such persuasion, though attended with the most monstrous errors, should not be a subject of reproach; and that every man, who professes himself to be sincere and ingenuous, should be accounted religious, and wise, tho' adopting even the horrid doctrines of atheism. Is not this, to throw open the door to all the modes of superstition, fanatical systems, and chimerical notions of the human mind? is not this a maxim that would countenance as many different religions and modes of worship as there are different people in the world? Alas! my dear brethren, be not deceived in this particular. Sincerity is no farther to be esteemed than as it is docile or enlightened. We are commanded to study our religion, and to believe its doctrines in sincerity and truth. We have, for our warrant, the authority of the church; let us learn to know it, and to repose ourselves safely therein. We may then place confidence in our sincerity, and spend our lives in peaceful expectation of that moment, which shall open to us the light of eternity.

A further instance, my dear brethren, of the flagrant insincerity of the unbeliever we are refuting, is the manner in which he supposes the catholic and the christian, to reason on matters of religion. What futile and ridiculous arguments doth he put into the mouths, both of the

one and the other, in order to render them contemptible ! He hath written an imaginary dialogue between a christian whom he supposes inspired, and an infidel whom he styles a rationalist. Hear what they are made to say. The former begins. “ Your reason tells you that the whole is greater than a part ; but I tell you, from God, that a part is greater than the whole.” To which the latter replies. “ And who are you that dare to tell me that God contradicts himself ? In whom shall I rather believe ? in him who instructs me, by means of reason, in the knowledge of eternal truths, or in you who would impose on me, in his name, the greatest absurdity ?”

But with what assurance, my dear brethren, doth this writer impute such arguments to christians ? The God of reason, we affirm, to be the God of revelation also. Reason and revelation are the two organs, by which he hath been pleased to make himself known to mankind ; either by way of teaching them the truth, or instructing them in the knowledge of his will. Should one of these organs contradict the other, it is certain that God would contradict himself. But can God be said to contradict himself, because he commands us to believe incomprehensible truths ? You tell us, ye impious infidels, that the tenets, which we look upon to be revealed, contradict eternal truths ; but it is not sufficient for you merely to assert this : and could you have proved it, you would have done it long ago, and triumphed in the victory. The insincerity of the author of *Emilius*, is not less reprehensible in the language of his pretended catholic. “ We catholics, says he, make a great noise about the authority of the church : but what do we gain by it,
if

if it requires as many proofs to establish this authority as other sects require immediately to establish their doctrines? The church determines that the church has a right to determine. Is not this a special proof of its authority?" Who would not think, my dear brethren, from the pretences of this impostor, that the authority of the church is to be proved only by its own decisions, and that it proceeds arbitrarily thus, "I determine that I am infallible; therefore, I am infallible." A scandalous imputation, my dear brethren! The grounds of christianity, the spirit of the gospel, and even the errors and weakness of the human understanding, all serve to demonstrate that the church, established by Jesus Christ, is an infallible church. We are assured that, as the divine legislator always instructed mankind in the ways of truth, the church of Christ will ever do the same. We prove the authority of the church therefore, not from that authority itself, but from that of Jesus Christ; a method of reasoning not less exact than what he reproaches us with, senseless and ridiculous.

It is not only in our times, my dear brethren, that the spirit of irreligion hath been a spirit of independence and revolt. And, in fact, how is it to be expected that men, so daring as to refuse to submit to the authority of God himself, should respect that of kings, who are representatives of God; or that of magistrates, who are the representatives of kings? "Mankind, says the author of Emilius to his pupil, is essentially made up of the common people; so that, were there not a king left upon the face of the earth, they would not be missed, and things would

would go on just as well without them.—The many (says he a little farther) will be always sacrificed to the few, and public interest to that of particulars. The specious names of justice and moderation, will be made the instruments of violence and the weapons of iniquity. Hence it follows, (continues he) that those distinguished orders of men, which prteend to be useful to the rest, are in reality, at the expence of the rest, useful only to themselves : and hence may be determined in what consideration they ought to be held, according to the rules of right reason and justice.” Thus, my dear brethren, doth impiety presume to question the intentions of him *by whom kings reign* ; thus doth it take delight in corrupting the sources of public felicity, and in propagating those maxims which tend to confusion and anarchy, with all their dreadful consequences. But what doth religion teach us, in this case ? “ Fear God, honour the king *——Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers ; for there is no power but of God : the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation †.”

Yes, my dear brethren, in every thing relative to civil objects, you ought to be as obedient to your prince, and to those who are deputed to exercise his authority, as unto God himself. Your duty to that supreme Being alone should set bounds to your submission ; and if then you should be deemed culpable, and suffer for your obedience to his great commands, you

* 1 Peter c. ii. v. 17. † Rom. c. xiii. v. 1, 2.
should

should submit without murmur or complaint. Even Nero and Domitian themselves, who chose rather to be a scourge to the earth, than the fathers of their people, were accountable only to God for the abuse of that power he put into their hands.

“ Christians (says St. *Augustine*) are obedient to their temporal lord, for the sake of their eternal one.”

We have taken notice, my dear brethren, but of a few of the many impieties contained in this treatise of *Education*; a work equally meriting the anathemas of the church, and the severity of the laws: and what more can be necessary to inspire you with horror against it? Miserable would it be for you, and unhappy for society, if your children were educated in the principles of this author. As nothing but religion hath taught us to know the nature of man, his greatness, his misery, and future destiny, it belongs only to that religion to form the understanding of youth, to improve their manners, and to procure for them lasting happiness both in this life and that which is to come. We are not insensible, my dear brethren, how laborious and difficult a task is the work of a truly christian education; nor that a very considerable share of prudence and knowledge is necessary to discharge it. What an admirable mixture of good nature and resolution it requires! What prudence, to adapt ourselves to all conditions, ages, dispositions and characters, without departing from our duty! what zeal! what patience; to nourish in young and tender minds, the precious seeds of innocence and virtue; to root up, as far as possible, those vicious inclinations,

tions, which are the sad effects of our original depravity ; and, in a word, to teach them, according to St. *Paul*, to “live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” * We say therefore, unto all those, who are charged with so important and honourable a function as the education of youth : Plant ye and water, in the firm hope that the Lord, assisting your endeavours, will give an increase. “Be instant in season and out of season, according to the directions of the same apostle, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. ||” Above all, be careful to unite instruction with example : instruction without example is a disgrace to the instructor, and a subject for scandal to him who is instructed. Let the pious and charitable Tobit be your model ; “carefully instruct your children, in doing the works of justice, in giving alms, in calling to mind the Lord, and in praising him at all times, in sincerity and with all their might ;” and your posterity, like that of this holy patriarch, will be loved of God and of man.

But at what time ought the education of children to commence ? at the first dawn of intelligence : and this dawn is sometimes premature. “Train up a child in the way he should go, saith the wise man, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. †” Such is in fact the ordinary course of human life : even in the midst of licentiousness and during the empire of the

* Titus c. ii. v. 12. || 2 Tim. c. iv. v. 1.

† Prov. c. xxii. v. 6.

passions, the principles of a christian education afford a light which occasionally discovers to the sinner the horror of that abyfs into which he is plunged ; and displays the means of his escape. How many are there, I say again, who, after having spent their youth in vice and libertinism, are brought back by this light into the paths of virtue ; and, pursuing, though late, the principles of religion and humanity, become an honour to themselves and to their country !

It remains, my dear brethren, that, in the close of this exhortation, I conjure you by the mercy of God, to attach yourselves inviolably to that holy religion in which you have had the happiness to be educated ; to defend yourselves against the approach of an absurd philosophy, which hath nothing less in view than to rob you of the inheritance of Jesus Christ, to render his promises void, and to set him on the footing with the founders of those religions, whose frivolous or pernicious doctrines have proved their imposture. The christian faith is despised, rejected and insulted only by those who are ignorant of it, or on whose irregularities it is too great a restraint. But the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. The christian and catholic church, is the commencement of the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ : “ Nothing is stronger, says St. *John Damascene*, than the church ; it is a rock which the waves beat against in vain ; it is a mountain which nothing can shake.”

For the foregoing causes, respecting the new treatise on education, entitled *Emilius*, &c. by *J. J. Rousseau*, citizen of Geneva ; after consulting

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sulting with divers persons distinguished for their learning and piety, and calling upon the name of the Lord, we condemn the said book, as containing abominable doctrines calculated to invalidate the principles of natural justice, and to subvert the foundations of the christian religion: as inculcating maxims contrary to the morality of the gospel; tending to disturb the peace of society, and to excite subjects to revolt against the authority of their lawful sovereigns: as containing a great number of propositions severally false, scandalous, full of rancour against the church and its ministers, derogatory from the respect due to the holy scriptures and the traditions of the church, erroneous, impious, blasphemous and heretical. We, therefore, expressly forbid the inhabitants of our diocese, to read or keep the said book, under the severest penalty of the law. We also direct that this our mandate be read in all the parochial churches of the city, suburbs and diocese of *Paris*; and also to be published and affixed wherever it may be judged needful. Given at our Archiepiscopal palace in *Paris*. Aug. 20, 1762.

Signed Christopher Archbishop of *Paris*.

By M. de la Touche.

A N
Expostulatory Letter

F R O M

J. J. ROUSSEAU, Citizen of *Geneva*,

T O

CHRISTOPHER DE BEAUMONT,

ARCHBISHOP of PARIS.

WHEREFORE, my Lord, should there be any altercation between you and me? what language can we speak, or how shall we understand each other, when there is hardly any thing in common between us?

I am compelled, nevertheless, to make you a reply; you yourself have compelled me to it. Had you only attacked my book, your censures might have passed unanswered; but you have attacked my personal character, and by so much the greater sanction your authority bears in the eye of the public, the less it becomes me to be silent, when I am the object of your defamation.

But before I proceed to my defence, I cannot forbear reflecting a little on the peculiarity of my

my destiny : peculiar indeed to myself alone. I was born with some share of natural genius ! the public have authoris'd me to make this boast. I spent my youth, nevertheless, in a happy obscurity, out of which I never attempted to emerge. Had I made such an attempt, indeed, it would have been as great a peculiarity, that, during the vivacity of youth, I should not have succeeded, as that I should succeed too well in the sequel, when that vivacity began to decay. In this obscurity, my lord, instead of a fortune I always despis'd, and a name I have since bought too dear, I possess'd the only blessings my heart was desirous of, those of tranquility and friendship. Thus, easy in my mind, and happy in my friends, I drew near my fortieth year, when, unluckily, an academical question engag'd my attention, and drew me into a profession, for which nature never intended me. The unexpected success of my first essay proved seductive. A numerous party of opponents started up against me, and without understanding my arguments, answer'd them with a petulance that piqued me, and a degree of vanity that perhaps excited mine. I stood up, of course, in my own defence, and, being urg'd from one dispute to another, found myself engag'd in a career of controversy almost before I was aware. Thus I became an author at a time of life when authors usually throw up their profession, and a man of letters even from my contempt for that character. From this time I have been a writer of some little consequence with the publick : but from this time, alas ! my friends and my repose have left me. My labour was all I got for my pains ; and a little reputation was to make up for every thing

thing else. If this be an indemnification to those who are ever absent from themselves, it never was any to me.

Had I placed even for a moment any hopes on so frivolous a gratification, I should have been soon undeceived. In what a fluctuation hath the public opinion constantly been, with regard to my abilities and character! Being at a distance, I was judged of only by interest or caprice, and for hardly two days together was ever looked upon in the same light. Sometimes I was a dark and gloomy being, at others an angel of light. I have seen myself within the space of a year, applauded, courted, entertained, and requested even at court, and again speedily after insulted, threatened, hated and condemned. Over night assassins laid in wait for me in the streets; and in the morning I was threatened with a *lettre-de-cacher*. The good and the evil came from almost the same source; and both of them were the effect of a mere song.

I have written, it is true, on several subjects, but always on the same principles; I had constantly the same system of morals, the same faith, the same maxims, and, if you will, the same opinions. Very different, however, have been the opinions that have been passed on my books, or rather on the author of my books; because I have been judged rather from the subjects I treated of, than from my sentiments on those subjects. After the publication of my first discourse *, I was said to be a writer fond of paradoxes, who amused himself in proving

* In answer to the question, Whether the cultivation of the arts and sciences had contributed to the purity of manners?

things he did not believe. After my letter on the French musick, I was called a professed enemy to that nation, and was very near being treated as a conspirator and traitor: one would have thought, by the zeal shewn on that occasion, that the fate of the French monarchy depended on the reputation of their opera. After my discourse on the Inequality of Mankind, I was deemed an Atheist, and Misanthrope: After my letter to Mr. d'Alembert, on the theatres, I was celebrated as the defender of Christian morals: after Eloisa, I was supposed to be passionate and tender; at present I am a monster of impiety, and shall probably by and by be a miracle of devotion.

Thus fluctuating is the public opinion concerning me; those who adopt it being as ignorant why they detest me now, as why they once respected me. As to myself, however, I have always remained the same; more zealous, perhaps, than enlightened in my researches, but sincere in all, even against myself; simple and well-meaning, but susceptible and weak; often doing wrong, yet always respecting what was right; connected by friendship, never by circumstances, and ever more strongly influenced by sentiment than interest; requiring nothing from others; unwilling to render myself dependent on any; submitting to their prejudices as little as to their will, and preserving my own as free as my reason; fearing God without being afraid of the devil; reasoning on matters of religion without licentiousness; approving neither impiety nor fanaticism, but hating persecutors still worse than infidels; without disguising my sentiments from any one,

with

without affectation, without artifice, without deceit; telling my faults to my friends, my sentiments to all the world, and to the public those truths which concern it, without flattery and without pride; equally careless whether I should please or offend it. Such are my crimes, and such are my merits.

At length, totally disgusted with that intoxicating vapour of reputation, which inflates without satisfying; wearied with importunities of indolent visitors, who, over-burthened with their own time, were prodigal of mine; and sighing after the necessary repose my heart is so fond of, I had joyfully laid down my pen. Satisfied with the reflection that I had never taken it up but for the good of my fellow-creatures, I required only, as the reward of my zeal, that I might be permitted to live unmolested in my retreat, and to die in peace. In this, however, I was mistaken; the officers were sent to apprehend me, and just at the moment that I flattered myself the troubles of my life were at an end, my greatest misfortunes began. There is something very particular in all this; yet this is nothing.

A citizen of Geneva gets a book printed in Holland, and by an arret of the Parliament of Paris, this book is burnt by the common hangman, without any respect shewn to the sovereign, whose privilege it had obtained. A Protestant proposes, in a Protestant country, certain objections against the Church of Rome, and he is condemned by the parliament of Paris. A republican makes objections, in a republican state, against monarchy, and he is condemned by the parliament of Paris. The par-

parliament of Paris must surely have strange notions of their jurisdiction, to suppose it extends over the whole human race.

The same parliament, ever so remarkably circumspect in their proceedings when individuals of their own nation are concerned, break through all order, in passing sentence on a poor foreigner. Without knowing whether he was really the author of the book imputed to him, whether he acknowledged it, or caused it to be printed; without any regard to the unhappiness of his situation, or pity for his bodily infirmities, they began their process, by ordering him to be clapped up in prison. Thus they would have had him taken out of his bed, and dragged from his house, to be thrown among infamous criminals, to rot in a jail. Nay, who knows but they might have burnt him at the stake, without suffering him to speak in his defence! for what reason is there to think they would have proceeded more regularly afterwards than at first, in a prosecution so violently commenced, as to be almost without example, even in the countries of the inquisition? Thus it is, in my case alone, that this sagacious tribunal forgets its prudential maxims; it is against me only, that a people, who boast so much of their humanity, and by whom I thought myself beloved, act with the strangest barbarity: it is thus, the country I preferred as an asylum above all others, justifies my giving it that preference! I know not how far such proceedings may be consistent with the laws of nations; but I know very well that where they are carried on, a man's liberty, and, perhaps, his life, lies at the mercy of the first printer who chuses to set his name to a book.

A citizen of Geneva owes no respect to such unjust magistrates, who order persons to be apprehended and committed to prison, on the first scandalous information given them, without citing the accused to appear and answer for himself. Now, not having been cited to appear, he is not obliged to do it. But, being thus attacked by force and violence, he is justified in flying from persecution. He shakes the dust off his feet, therefore, and leaves an inhospitable country, where the strong are so ready to oppress the weak, and to load the stranger with chains, without hearing his defence; without knowing whether the act he is accused of, be criminal; or being so, whether he hath indeed committed it. He abandons with regret the pleasing solitude he had chosen, leaving all his possessions, his few, but valuable friends, behind. Weak and infirm as he is, he is obliged to undergo the fatigues of a long journey; hoping at the end of it to breathe freely in a land of liberty. He repairs to his own country, flattering himself his reception there will console him for his past disgrace.— But what am I going to say? My heart sinks, my hand trembles, and my pen falls to the ground: I will be silent, nor be guilty of exposing my country.

And wherefore am I thus treated? I do not ask, for what reason? but on what pretence? The magistrates have been rash enough to judge me guilty of impiety, without reflecting that the book, containing the pretended instances of it, is in every body's hands. What would they not give effectually to suppress that authentic testimony in my favour; that they

might then be able more boldly to say it contains what they pretend to have found there ! But this proof of my innocence will remain in spite of all their efforts to suppress it ; and posterity will be amazed, in looking therein for the enormous crimes imputed to the author, to find only the errors and mistakes of a sincere friend to virtue.

I shall avoid speaking of my contemporaries, because I would be hurtful to none. But the Atheist Spinoza was peaceably suffered to teach his doctrines to the world ; he met with no opposition in printing or selling his works. He came to France and was well received there ; all the states of Europe were ready to afford him countenance, or at least protection. He was offered professorships by some princes, and particularly honoured by others ; living and dying peacefully, and even respected. And yet, in an age so much celebrated as the present, for philosophy, reason and humanity, a defender of the cause of truth is proscribed and pursued from state to state, from asylum to asylum, without the least regard for his indigence, or pity for his infirmities ; and all for having proposed, with great circumspection, and even with great respect and tenderness for mankind, some doubts founded on the honour of the supreme Being. For this he is hunted through the world, with a bitterness of persecution the vilest malefactor never experienced, and which would be even cruel to exert against a man possessed of health and strength to support him under it. Prohibited the use of the common elements of fire and water in almost every part of Europe, he is driven from his very retreat
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in the woods ; and is only safe in the fortitude of an illustrious protector, and the goodness of an enlightened prince ; all which became necessary to ensure him an asylum in the midst of the mountains. Instead of safety thus procured, he had, in all probability, spent the remainder of his miserable life in chains, or perished beneath the torture, had he been found, during the first phrenzy which seized on governments, at the mercy of his inhuman persecutors.

Escaped from the hangman, he fell next into the hands of the priests : not that I shall mention any ill treatment, as surprising, he might meet with from them : but surely it is something wonderful, that a man of virtue, whose mind is as noble as his birth, an illustrious archbishop, who ought to suppress their baseness, should authorize it ! Yet so it is ; this Catholic prelate issues out a mandate against a Protestant author ; he mounts his tribunal to examine into the particular doctrines of an heretic ; and although he condemns indiscriminately every one that is not of his church, yet he refuses to permit the accused to err his own way, but prescribes in a manner the path in which he must descend to hell. No sooner have the inferior clergy received his sanction, but they fly with virulence on the enemy whom they imagine to be levelled with the ground, and to lie at their mercy. There is not the meanest vicar or ignorant curate of a country parish, who doth not take a pride in insulting the devoted author, whom the senate and their bishop have united to crush.

Thus, my Lord, have I displayed the unhappy circumstances peculiar to my situation,

of which there is no precedent. Nor is this all.—The present is perhaps one of the most difficult passages of my life; one of those in which revenge and self-love are the most easily satisfied, and least permit a man of integrity to be moderate. Ten lines more, and I cover my persecutors with eternal ridicule. Oh! that the public did but know two anecdotes without my being at the trouble of telling them! Oh! that they did but know who were the persons that meditated my ruin, and what steps they have taken to effect it! They would see by what contemptible insects, by what dark means the powers of government are sometimes moved: they would see by what sour leaven the parliament was put into a ferment. They would see from what a ridiculous cause, the several states of Europe united in league together against the son of a watch-maker! How greatly should I enjoy their surprize, were I not myself so nearly concerned in it.

Hitherto my pen, though bold in relating the truth, hath always kept itself free from satire; it hath always respected the character of others in defending my own. Shall I now, therefore, when I am going to lay it aside, dip it into calumny, or copy the stile of my enemies? No; be theirs all the advantage of stabbing men in the dark. For my part, I would only defend myself openly, and would do nothing more than act in my own defence. To this end, what the public already know, is sufficient; or at least what they may know without my giving any one offence.

A surprizing thing of this kind, and what I may safely say, is to see the intrepid Christopher de Beaumont, whom no power could reduce to
make

make peace with the Jansenists, become, without knowing it, the dupe of their animosity : to see their most irreconcilable enemy raging against me, because I would not be of their party ; because I would not write against the Jesuits, whom I do not love, though I have no cause of complaint against them, and think them ill treated. If your Lordship pleases to cast your eye over the sixth volume of the New Eloisa, you will there discover, in a note, page 138, the true source of my misfortunes. I have prophesied in that note (for I intermeddle also sometimes with prophesying) that as soon as the Jansenists should gain the superiority, they would be more persecuting and severe than their enemies. I did not then know, however, that my prediction would be verified on myself. The thread of this clue would not be difficult for those to unravel who know how my book hath been treated. I cannot say more on this head without saying too much ; but I may at least inform you, what sort of people you have been influenced by, without suspecting it.

Will it be believed that you would have attacked my book had it not been first censured by the parliament ? Some people may believe it, or at least say it ; but you, whose conscience will not permit of deceit, will not say so. My Discourse on the Inequality of Mankind, was generally read throughout your diocese, and yet you published no mandate against it. My Letter to Mr. d'Alembert was as general, and yet you published no mandate against it. The New Eloisa was universal, and yet your Lordship issued no mandate. All these books, however, which you must have read, since you judge of

them, contain the same maxims, and display, without disguise, the same modes of thinking.

If the subject of them did not admit of their being so fully explained, they gained in force what they lost in extent, and express the author's profession of faith with less reserve than that of the Savoyard curate. Wherefore, my Lord, did you not exert yourself on these occasions? Was your flock then less dear to you? did they read my books less? did they dislike my writings more? were they less exposed to error? No — But the Jesuits were not then laid under proscription. I had not then fallen into the snares my enemies have since laid for me. That fatal note was not then known; and when it was known, the public had already passed their judgment of approbation on the book. It was too late to think of raising their resentment on that score for the present; it was thought proper to defer it to a more convenient opportunity. The occasion was attentively watched for, and eagerly seized, with all that fury which is common to partial zealots; nothing now was talked of but imprisonment and tortures. My book was said to be the signal for anarchy, and the trumpet of atheism; the author was stigmatised as a monster of iniquity, and it was thought amazing that he had been so long permitted to live.

Amidst this universal clamour, your Lordship would have been ashamed to be silent; you chose therefore rather to commit an act of cruelty than to be accused of wanting zeal. You chose rather to serve your enemies than to bear the insult of their reproaches. Such, my Lord,

Lord, you must own, was the true motive of your mandate; and such are the facts whose concurrence may, in my opinion, be very justly denominated singular.

Justice, I know, hath long given place to the maxims and formalities of state. I am not insensible that in some circumstances, a man, invested with a public character, is unhappily compelled, against his will, to act against honest men. To be moderate among zealots, is to expose oneself to their fury; and I can easily conceive, that, in such a combination as that to which I have fallen a victim, it is necessary to join the cry and hunt with the wolves, or run the risque of being devoured by them. I do not complain therefore that your Lordship has issued a mandate against my book; but I complain that you have done it against myself, and that with as little candour as truth. I complain that, authorizing by your own language that which you reproach me for having put into the mouth of a dogmatist; you load me with calumnies which, without hurting my cause, attack my honour, or rather yours. I complain that you have wantonly, without reason, without necessity, and without regard to my misfortunes, abused me in a manner the most unworthy your own character. And after all, my Lord, what is it I have done? I, who have always spoken of you with so much esteem; I, who have so often admired your unshaken fortitude; though lamenting, it is true, the use which your prejudices induced you to make of it; I, who have always respected, and still respect, your virtues, even though you have so grossly injured me.

But thus it is, that people extricate themselves from difficulties, when they are determined to find fault, and are themselves in the wrong. As you could not answer my objections, you have imputed them to me as crimes; you imagined you should make me despicable; by ill-treating me; but you have been mistaken. On the contrary, without invalidating my arguments, you have made every humane and generous mind take part in my sufferings; you have given occasion for every person of sense to reflect, that a man who judged so ill of the author, was still less qualified to judge well of his book.

You have shewn yourself, my Lord, neither humane nor generous; and yet you might have been so, without omitting any of the arguments you have made use of against my book: nay, I will take upon me to say, they would in that case have had much more weight. I must acknowledge, also, that I have no right to require those virtues of you, nor to expect any thing like them from an ecclesiastic. We shall enquire however, if you have, at least, been equitable and just; for this is a duty imposed on all mankind, nor are the saints themselves excused in the breach of it.

Your Lordship's mandate hath two points in view; the one is to censure my book, and the other to abuse my person. I shall think I have made a sufficient reply to it, therefore, if I prove that wherever you have endeavoured to refute me, you have reasoned falsely, and that where you have insulted me, you have been guilty of calumny. But when we prove our assertions as we go on, and are compelled by
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the importance of the subject, and the quality of our adversary, to proceed sedately, and to follow him step by step through all his censures, every word almost requires a page; thus while a short satire is amusing to the reader, a long defence becomes irksome and tedious. Notwithstanding this inconvenience, however, I must make a defence, or sit down contented under your falsest imputations. I am resolved, therefore, to defend myself, but shall rather defend my honour than my book. It is not the creed of the Savoyard curate that I examine, but the mandate of the archbishop of Paris; the scandal thrown on the editor only obliging him to speak of the work itself. I will endeavour to do myself justice, because it is my duty; I owe it to my own character. At the same time, however, I am very sensible how disagreeable a circumstance it is, to contend with such a powerful adversary, and that the mere justification of the innocent can afford but very dull entertainment to the reader.

The fundamental principle of all morality, that on which I have reasoned in all my writings, and which I explained in the last, with all the perspicuity I was master of, is this; that man is naturally good; that he loves justice and order; that there is no original perversity in the human heart, and that the first emotions of nature are always right. I have shewn that the only passion which is born with man, to wit, self-love, is in itself indifferent either to good or evil; that it becomes good or evil only by accident, and according to the circumstances in which it is displayed. I have shewn that none of the vices imputed to the human heart are natural to it; I have described

the manner in which they arise, have traced as it were, their genealogy, and shewn the manner in which, by a successive deviation from their original goodness, mankind are become what they are.

I have explained farther what I understand by this original goodness, which does not seem to flow from that indifference to good and evil, which is natural to self-love. Man is not a simple, but a compound being, formed of two substances. It is true, that all the world do not agree in this; but you and I, my Lord, are agreed in it, and I have endeavoured to demonstrate it to others. This being admitted then, self-love is not a simple passion; but hath two principles, *viz.* the intelligent being and the sensitive being, whose happiness is not one and the same. The sensual appetites tend to the gratification of the body, and the love of order to that of the mind. This last passion, expanded and become active, is denominated conscience, but conscience displays itself, and acts only from knowledge. It is by acquiring knowledge only that man acquires a sense of order; and it is from his acquiring this sense, that his conscience induces him to love it. Conscience is, therefore, nothing in those men, who have never compared different objects, and seen their relations. In such a state as this, a man knows nothing but himself; he doth not see his own happiness to be consistent with, or opposed to, that of others: he neither loves nor hates; but, confined solely to physical instinct, is a mere sensitive being, an idiot. This I have shewn at large in my discourse on the Inequality of mankind.

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When, by a developement of the passions, the progress of which I have traced out, men begin to look round, on their fellow-creatures, they begin also to see the relation they stand in to one another, and to the objects about them; hence arise their ideas of agreement or disagreement, of justice, of order, and the like. It is now that moral beauty becomes perceptible, and with conscience begins to act. They now possess virtues, and if they have vices also, it is because their separate interests increase, and their ambition is excited, in proportion as their knowledge grows extensive. So long also as the opposition of their interests is less than the concurrence of their knowledge, men are essentially good. Such is the second state of mankind.

But when all the particular interests of individuals interfere, and clash against each other, when self-love is converted by its fermentation into self-interest, and opinion, by rendering the whole universe necessary to each individual, makes them all enemies, from their birth, and causes the happiness of one to depend on the misery of another; then conscience, too feeble to withstand the violence of the passions, is silenced by their impetuosity, and remains a mere empty word, which mankind reciprocally make use of to deceive each other. Then every one pretends to sacrifice his own interest to that of his country, and all are liars. Not one is desirous of the public good, unless it coincides with his own; and hence this co-incidence between the public and private good, becomes the object of that true policy, which alone is calculated to make men virtuous and happy. But I am now beginning to talk a strange language,

as little understood by the majority of readers as by your lordship. This is the third and last state, beyond which nothing remains to be done; and thus we see how man, being naturally and originally good, individuals become wicked. The great object of my book is the means of preventing this defection. Not that I affirmed it, in the present order of things, to be absolutely possible; but this I affirmed, and do still, that there are no other means of effecting it, but those I have pointed out.

Your lordship is, nevertheless, pleased to say, my plan of education is so far from being consistent with christianity, that it is not adapted either to form citizens or men: your only proof of this assertion, however, is the doctrine of original sin. Now baptism, my lord, is the only means of deliverance from original sin and its effects. Whence it follows, according to your argument, that there never were any citizens, or men in the world, but Christians. You must either deny this consequence, therefore, or own that you have proved too much.

As you go so far back for your proofs, I must do the same for my objections to them. And first it appears to me, that this doctrine of original sin, subject as it is to the most striking difficulties, is not to be found in the scriptures, so clearly or so strictly expressed as the rhetorical Augustine, and other theologues have been pleased to maintain. It is farther hardly possible to conceive, that God should create so many innocent souls, with a view to join them to corrupt bodies, there to contract a moral impurity, for which he should damn them to all eternity in hell, though guilty of no other

crime than what was the immediate effect of that union, which was his own work. I shall not say, whether, (as you have boasted) by this system, you have cleared up the mystery of the human heart; but I affirm that you have greatly obscured by it, the justice and goodness of the supreme Being. If you have removed one objection, it hath been only to substitute others much greater in its place.

But after all, what hath this doctrine to do with the author of Emilius? It is certain, that notwithstanding he conceived his book might be of use to mankind in general, he wrote it more particularly for christians; for the use of men, cleansed from the guilt of original sin and its effects, at least with regard to their souls, by the sacrament instituted for that purpose. According to that doctrine, we all recovered our primitive innocence in our infancy, being rendered by baptism as pure of heart as Adam came out of the hands of God. Will you say, that we have contracted new impurities? How? As we began the world, with being thus cleansed, in what manner can we have contracted them since? Is not the blood of Christ sufficiently efficacious to wash away the stain? or is our guilt the effect of the natural corruption of the flesh; and hath God made us originally corrupt, independent of original sin, on purpose to have the pleasure of punishing us? You attribute to original sin the vices of those, whom you affirm to be cleansed from it; and yet blame me for having attributed their vices to another cause. Is it just to make it criminal in me not to reason so bad as your lordship?

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It may be said, indeed, that the effects which I attribute to baptism *, do not appear by any external signs; that christians are not less prone to vice than infidels; whereas, according to my supposition, the native virulence of sin should appear in the later, and make an evident distinction between them. With the assistance, it might be said, of gospel morality, added to baptism, all christians ought to resemble angels; while infidels, being not only uncleansed from original sin, but also given up to false worship, would be little better than devils. I can imagine, that, if this difficulty were artfully insisted on, it would prove very embarrassing: for what answer can we make to those who are ready to demonstrate, that the effects of a redemption, purchased at so high a price, are with regard to the moral virtues of mankind, next kin to nothing. But, setting aside my suspicion, that no expedient, agreeable to sound theology, can be found to get over this difficulty, were I to admit that baptism does not effectually reme-

* Burnet supposes that the corruption and mortality of the human race, in consequence of the fall of Adam, were the natural effect of the forbidden fruit; that aliment containing some poisonous juices, which proved destructive to the animal œconomy, by irritating the passions, weakening the understanding, and diffusing principles of vice and mortality throughout the whole man. In this case, however, the nature of the remedy being adapted to that of the disease, it is plain that baptism ought to have a physical operation on the body of man, by restoring to him the constitution he enjoyed in a state of innocence, and, if not the immortality dependent on it, at least, all the moral effects of such a re-establishment of the animal œconomy.

dy the corruption of our nature, your lordship will not be found to have reasoned a jot better. We are sinners, you say, because of the sins of our first parents; but how came our first parents to be sinners themselves? Why is not the same reason, by which you would explain his sin, applicable to his posterity, without imputing to them his guilt? and why must we impute injustice to God, in that we are made sinners, and subjected to punishment from the vice of our birth, when our first parents were sinners, and were punished in like manner, without it? Original sin may serve to explain every thing but its own principle, and this is the very thing to be explained.

You advance that, according to my principle, we lose sight of that ray of light which discovers to us the mystery of our own hearts; and at the same time do not see that my principle, more universal than yours, explains even the sin of the first man Adam *, which yours leaves
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* To demur against an useless and arbitrary prohibition, is nothing but what is natural; but it is so far from being vicious in itself, that it is conformable to the order of things, and the constitution of human nature: for man would not be in a state to provide for his own preservation, if he had not a very lively sense of self-love, and of all those rights and privileges he hath received from nature. An omnipotent Being would require nothing but what is useful; but a feeble being, whose power is farther limited and restrained by law, loses part of himself by such restraint, and is urged doubtless to reclaim what he is thus deprived of. To impute this to him as a crime, is to make it criminal in him, to be himself, and not another person; it is

in obscurity. You behold man only as being in the hands of the devil, and I explain the manner of his fall. The cause of evil is, according to you, the corruption of our nature; and this very corruption is the evil of which I would discover the cause. We both are agreed, I imagine, that man was created originally

to require him to be, and not to be, at the same time. For this reason, the command which was broken by Adam, appears to me to have been rather a paternal advice, than an absolute prohibition; a kind of friendly warning to him, to abstain from a pernicious and deadly fruit. This idea is surely more conformable to our notions of the goodness of the Deity, and even to the text, than that which Divines have been pleased to teach us; for, with regard to the twofold death, it hath been shewn, that the phrase *morte morieris* is not so emphatical as they pretend; being only an hebraism, made use of in other parts of scripture, where such emphasis could not take place. There is, besides, so natural a motive for indulgence and commiseration in the subtilty of the serpent, and the seduction of the woman, that, all circumstances considered, the crime of Adam appears really but a venial sin. And yet, according to our divines, what a shocking punishment attends it! it is impossible to conceive any thing more terrible! For what greater punishment could Adam have been subjected to, even for the greatest of crimes, than that of being condemned, together with his posterity, to death in this world, and to suffer to all eternity amidst the flames of hell, in the next? Can such a punishment be inflicted by the God of mercy on a poor unhappy being, merely for suffering himself to be deceived? How do I abominate this discouraging doctrine of our cruel theologues! I should think myself a blasphemer, indeed, if I were tempted but for a moment to believe it.

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good ; but you say he is wicked because he is wicked ; and I endeavour to shew how he became so. Which of us, do you think, approaches nearest to first principles ?

And yet you proceed in a triumphant manner, as if you had levelled my argument with the ground. You oppose against me, as an immoveable obstacle, “ that striking mixture of greatness and meanness, of zeal for truth, and love for error, of inclination to virtue, and tendency to vice,” which is to be found in man. “ Astonishing contrast ! say you, which disconcerts the pagan philosophy, and leaves it to wander in vain speculation !”

The theory of man, however, is not a vain speculation, as it is founded in nature, and proceeds only on the support of well-connected facts, which, leading us to the sources of the passions, teach us how to regulate their course. If you are pleased to call the Savoyard’s creed heathen philosophy, I can make no reply to such an imputation, because I cannot comprehend your meaning * ; but I think it ludicrous enough that you should borrow his own terms to tell us he hath not explained, what he hath explained so clearly.

Your lordship will permit me to remind you of the conclusion you have drawn from an objection so well discussed, with all the chain of consequences attending it. “ Man finds himself impelled by an unhappy tendency to vice, and how shall he make head against it, if he be

* Unless, indeed, it relates to what his lordship charges me with in the sequel, of admitting a plurality of Gods.

not, in his infancy, put under the direction of preceptors, abounding in virtue, diligence and wisdom; or if, during his whole life, he does not, under the protection, and with the grace, of God, make continual and powerful efforts to withstand it." That is as much as to say, We see mankind are wicked, notwithstanding they are kept under the most tyrannical subjection, from their infancy; if, therefore, they are not kept under such early subjection, how shall they ever become virtuous and prudent, since by constantly tyrannizing over them, it is impossible to make them so?

The force of our arguments concerning education, will become more sensible, if we apply them to a different subject. Let us, therefore, suppose, my lord, a man should address himself to us in the following manner. "You give yourselves a great deal of trouble to make choice of the most equitable governments, and to procure good laws. But I will demonstrate to you, in the first place, that your forms of government themselves occasion those evils for which you think them a remedy. I will prove to you farther, that it is impossible you should ever have either good laws, or equitable governments; and lastly, I will point out to you the true way to prevent all the evils you complain of, without government, and without laws."

Let us suppose that after this, he should lay down his system, and point out his pretended means. I do not enquire whether his system be reasonable, or his means practicable. If they were not, it is possible he would only be looked upon as a lunatic, and be very justly confined to a dark chamber. But if unhappily his system
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should be well founded and practicable, it would go much worse with him, and you will readily conceive, my lord, or others will do it for you, that it would be difficult to find racks and tortures enough to punish the detestable wretch for being in the right. But this is not strictly the present case; and whatever might befall the person of such a victim, it is certain an inundation of writings would burst out against his book. There would not be a single scribbler on the town, or under-graduate of the college, but, in order to pay his court to those in power, and proud of a *cum privilegio* to his writings, would load him with a pamphlet of abuse, and boast of having silenced the man, who might either be prevented speaking, or might hold such antagonists in too much contempt to answer them. But this case also is not exactly to the present point. We will suppose then lastly, that some grave personage, interested in the affair, should think himself obliged to follow the example of others, and amidst other declamatory abuses, should address the culprit as follows. "What dost thou mean, abandoned wretch? wouldst thou overturn all government and law? when these are our only check on vice, and even these can hardly restrain it within moderate bounds? Good God! what would become of us, if we had neither laws nor government? Take away our prisons and our gibbets, and thefts and robberies would become universal: O, thou art an abominable wretch."

If, after so harsh a reproof, the poor man might venture to speak, he would doubtless express himself thus. "Excuse me, my noble lord, your honour is guilty of a *petitio principii*. I did not say that vice ought not to be suppressed:

fed : but I say it would be better to prevent its existence. I would provide against the insufficiency of the laws, and you object to me that very insufficiency. You accuse me of introducing abuses, because, instead of remedying, I chuse rather to prevent them.—What ! if there were a method by which we might live always in health, must it be suppressed because the physicians would have nothing to do ? Your honour is desirous of seeing racks and gibbets ; and I of seeing no malefactors to require them ; with all due submission, therefore, I do not think myself that abominable wretch, your honour pronounces me.”

But to return to your lordship's mandate. “ Alas ! my dear brethren, in spite of the principles of the most salutary and virtuous education ; and notwithstanding the most encouraging promises, and the most terrible menaces, of religion, the errors of youth are still too frequent.” But I have proved that the education which you call the most salutary, is the most absurd and senseless ; that the education you call the most virtuous, is in fact the cause of all the vices of children : I have proved that all the celestial glories of paradise have less influence over them than a lump of sugar-candy, and that they are much more afraid of being tired at vespers, than of burning in hell : I have proved that all the errors and extravagancies of youth, which you complain cannot be prevented by your means, are really effected by them. “ Into what errors and excesses doth not youth, when let alone, precipitate itself !” Youth, my lord, when let alone, never goes astray ; all its errors arise from being misled. The companions and mistresses of young men,
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only compleat what their priests and preceptors begun. This, my lord, I have proved. But your lordship proceeds. "It is a torrent that rushes forth, in spite of the most powerful dykes that can be raised to oppose it: what then would be the consequence, if no obstacles were made use of to withstand its efforts?" In answer to this I might say, "It is a torrent which breaks down your feeble dykes and carries all before it. Enlarge its bed, and let it flow without obstacle, and it will do no harm." But I am ashamed of employing on so serious a subject such florid declamation as each party makes use of at pleasure, and which proves nothing on either side.

It appears, however, that, notwithstanding the extravagances of youth are too numerous and frequent, on account of original sin, your lordship is not at so great variance with them on the whole; as you seem to be so well satisfied with that salutary and virtuous method of education, which is practised by your preceptors so full of virtue, diligence and wisdom; so that you think youth would be still greater losers were they educated in any other manner, and it seems that you do not in fact think quite so ill of the present age, *the sink of all ages*, as you affect to speak in your mandate.

I confess, indeed, it is quite superfluous for those people to project new schemes of education, who are well satisfied with the present; but if this be the case with your lordship, you must agree with me that you are not very nice or difficult in this matter. Had you been so easy with regard to doctrines, your diocese had not experienced the troubles with which it hath
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been long agitated ; the storm you raised would not have fallen on the jesuits ; I should not have been oppressed for the sake of company ; and you would have enjoyed a greater share of tranquillity as well as myself.

You confess that, to reform the world, as far as the weakness, and according to you the corruption, of our nature will permit, it is sufficient to observe, under the direction and influence of grace, the dawnings of human reason, and to direct them carefully to the path of truth. “ By such means, say you, those minds, which are as yet exempt from prejudices, may be put always upon their guard against error ; those hearts which are as yet free from violent passions, may take the impression of every virtue.” So far then we are agreed, for this I have said myself. It is true, I did not add that children should only be educated by priests ; nor did I even think it necessary in order to form them citizens or men ; but this error, if it be one, is so common among catholicks, that it surely should not be thought so very great a crime in a protestant. I do not enquire whether, in your country, the priests themselves are accounted very good citizens ; but as it has been your business to educate the present generation, it lies between you, on one part, and your former mandates on the other, to decide whether their pupils have profited so much by the spiritual milk of the word, as to become such good saints, such sincere worshippers of God, such great men, “ as to be worthy of being the support and ornament of their country.” I might add to this, another observation which ought to strike all good Frenchmen, and
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of course your lordship, as such: and this is, that of all the several kings that have reigned over your nation, the very best of them is the only one who was not educated by priests.

But of what consequence is this, since I do not exclude them from that task? Let them educate youth if they are capable of it; I pretend not to oppose it; so that what you have said on that head, doth not in the least affect my book. Will you assert this, my plan is a bad one, merely because it is better adapted to other people than it is to those of the church?

If man is naturally good, as I think I have sufficiently demonstrated; it follows that he will remain such unless some foreign cause corrupts him; and if men be originally wicked, (which great pains have been taken to make me believe) it still follows that the wickedness comes from some foreign cause. Close up, therefore, all the avenues of vice, and the human heart will be always good.

On this principle I lay down the negative plan of education as the best, or rather as the only one that is good for any thing. I prove that all positive education acts contrary to the end designed; and shew in what manner the point aimed at, may be attained.

I call positive education that which tends to form the understanding before the proper time, and to give a child prematurely the knowledge of the duties of a man. I call that negative education, which tends to perfect the corporeal organs, the instrument of our knowledge, and which prepares us for reasoning by exercising our senses. Do what we will, however, negative education is not inactive. It is true, it does not inculcate virtue, but it prevents the
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introduction of vice: it doth not teach us the truth, but preserves us from error. It disposes a child towards every thing that may lead to truth, when he is in a capacity to comprehend it; and to good, when he is in a capacity to love and admire it.

This fact displeases and offends you; it is easy to see the reason of it. You begin by calumniating the design of the proposer. According to you, this inactivity of the mind appeared to me necessary, in order to dispose it to receive the errors I wanted to inculcate. It is not, however, very easy to conceive what error a tutor can want to inculcate, who teaches his pupil nothing so carefully, as to be sensible of his own ignorance, and to know that he knows nothing. You agree that the understanding is progressive, and is formed by degrees. "But doth it thence follow, say you, that a child at the age of ten years should not know the difference between good and evil, that he should confound wisdom with folly, gentleness with cruelty, and virtue with vice?" Doubtless all this will follow, if the judgment doth not sooner unfold itself. "What!" you proceed, "will he not perceive that it is good to obey his parents, and that it is evil to disobey them?" So far from it, my lord, that I maintain he will, on the contrary, perceive that, to leave his play to go to his book, notwithstanding it may be done in obedience to his parents, is an evil, and that to disobey them, in possessing himself of some delicious forbidden fruit, is good. I must confess, indeed, he will perceive that it is an evil to be punished, and that it is good to be rewarded; and it is by the balance of this contradictory
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good and evil, that infantine prudence is always regulated. This, I think, I have fully demonstrated in my two first volumes, and particularly in the dialogue between the preceptor and the child. But you, my lord, refute my two volumes in as many lines; thus, "To assert this, my dear brethren, is to calumniate human nature, in imputing to it a degree of stupidity which is foreign to it." It is certainly impossible to make use of a keener or more concise argument. But this ignorance, which you are pleased to call stupidity, is constantly found in every mind, lying under the restraint of imperfect organs, or under the want of due cultivation: this is an observation easily made, and may be confirmed by the whole world. To impute this ignorance, therefore, to human nature, is not to calumniate or revile it: it is you, my lord, who have done this, in imputing to it a malignity to which it is a stranger.

But you go on. "To think of instructing mankind only at a season when their growing passions are most prevalent, is to inculcate it in a manner which the author himself explodes."

Here is another sinister intention, which your lordship is so good as to impute to me, though, I dare say, no other person would ever have found it in the book. I have shewn, in the first place, that a child educated after my method, would not be under the tyranny of the passions at the time you speak of: secondly, I have shewn in what manner the lessons of prudence may retard the development of those very passions. It is the bad effects of your own mode of education that you impute to mine; while you object to me those faults which I teach

you how to prevent. I have secured the heart of my pupil till he arrive at the age of manhood ; and when I see the passions ready to break forth, I even then take measures to retard their progress. Prudential instructions are of no use to a child, when very young, as he can neither interest himself in them, nor understand them. They are also useless, when he is grown up, and his heart is already agitated by the passions. It is at the period only which I have pointed out, that they can be really useful ; for then, whether it be to instruct or to divert the attention of youth, it is equally necessary that such attention should be engaged.

You say, “ in order that youth should possess the requisite docility to receive our instructions, I would have them be destitute of every principle of religion. The reason, my lord, is plain ; I would have them be of some religion, and am therefore against teaching them any thing, the truth of which they are not capacitated to understand. But, had I said, my lord, that, “ in order to find youth possessed of the requisite docility to receive our instructions, we must be careful to begin with them before they come to years of understanding ; ” should I have reasoned worse than your lordship ? And can this be any prepossession in favour of the instructions you give to children ? According to you I made choice of the age of reason to inculcate error ; and you anticipate that age, to inculcate truth. You are solicitous, and in haste, to instruct a child, before he is capable of discerning right from wrong ; while I am indifferent, and wait to deceive him, till he is capable of judging for himself. Is this a natural conclusion ? Which, my

my lord, is most to be suspected of imposture, he who would address himself only to men, or he who would have to do solely with children?

You censure me, for having affirmed and demonstrated, that every child who believes in God, is necessarily an idolater, or anthropomorphite; and controvert that assertion, by affirming, that we can suppose neither one nor the other, of a child, that receives the education of a christian. This, my lord, is the matter in question: it remains to examine the proofs. Mine is, that no education, however truly christian, can confer a degree of understanding on a child which is above his years, or detach his ideas from material objects, from which even grown persons cannot detach theirs. I will appeal farther, to experience; advising my readers to consult their own memory, and to recollect whether, in believing a God, during their infancy, they did not always attach some corporeal image to their idea of the Deity. When you tell a child "that the Deity is like nothing which comes under the cognizance of our senses," his mind is either so perplexed as to understand nothing, or he understands that the Deity is nothing. When you talk to him of *infinite intelligence*, he is ignorant what *intelligence* is; and still more so of what you mean by the term *infinite*. You may, indeed, make him repeat after you the words you dictate to him; you may, also, if it be required, make him say he understands them: for that concession costs him little, and he had much rather say, he comprehends you, than be chid or beaten for want of apprehension. The ancients, not even excepting the Jews, universally represented the Deity as a corporeal Being; and are there not many

christians, particularly Roman catholics, who do the same at this day? If your children talk like men, it is because your men are still children: and this is the very reason why your inexplicable mysteries no longer puzzle any one; the terms of them being as easily got by rote as any other. It is, indeed, one of the great conveniences of modern christianity, to be satisfied with a certain jargon of words without ideas.

From an examination into that intelligence, which leads to the knowledge of God, I find it unreasonable to believe this knowledge "always necessary to salvation." As proof of this, I cite the case of idiots and children; with whom also I rank those persons who have not acquired sufficient knowledge to comprehend the existence of God. On this occasion you say, "We need not be surprized, however, my dear brethren, that this author defers so long the knowledge of the existence of a Deity, when he doth not believe it necessary to salvation." Thus you begin, by rendering my proposition more obnoxious, in charitably suppressing the word *always*; which not only softens, but, in fact, gives it a different sense; for, according to the manner in which I have expressed myself, it is admitted that this knowledge is usually necessary; and according to that you impute to me, it never is necessary. After this little piece of deceit, your lordship proceeds thus. "It is clear (says he, in the character of an imaginary personage) that a man may, under some circumstances, live to grow old, without believing in God, and yet he would not, for that reason, be deprived of his presence in the other world, if his unbelief were involuntary: and this I affirm to be sometimes the case."

Before

Before I proceed to transcribe your remark on this passage, you will permit me to make mine; and this is, that the pretended personage you speak of here, is really myself, and not the curate: this passage, which you imagined to be in his creed, being in a different part of my work. You must read, my lord, very carelessly, and quote very inaccurately, those writings you nevertheless so severely condemn. A person in office, who takes upon him thus to censure others, ought surely to be a little more exact. I come now to your remark: "Observe, my dear brethren, the author doth not mean here a person who is incapable of the use of reason, but merely one whose reason might have received no assistance from information." After this you affirm the proposition to be absurd. "Saint Paul, you say, assures us indeed that, among the pagan philosophers, many had, by the force of reason alone, arrived at the knowledge of the true God;" and thereupon you quote the words of that apostle.

It is often, my lord, but a small fault, not to understand the author we read, but it is a great one not to understand him before we attempt to refute him, and still a much greater not to do it, before we take upon ourselves to abuse him. Now, you have not understood that passage of my book, which you have here attacked, any more than you have done many others. The reader will judge, however, whether this be my fault or yours, when I have quoted the passage itself throughout.

"We protestants hold, that no child, who dies before he arrives at the age of reason, is deprived of salvation: the Roman catholics believe the same of every child that is baptized,

though it should never once have heard the name of God. There are some cases, therefore, in which men may be saved without believing in God, as in infancy and imbecillity of mind, as in idiots and madmen, where the understanding is incapable of the operations requisite to infer an acknowledgment of the Deity. All the difference that I see here between me and my readers, is, that you think children of seven years of age capacitated to believe in God, and I do not think them capable of it even at fifteen. Whether I am right or wrong in this particular, it is not in itself an article of faith, but only a simple observation in natural history.

“On the same principles it is evident, that if a man should arrive at old age without believing in God, he would not be deprived of his presence in the other world, provided his infidelity be not wilful; and this, I say, may sometimes happen. You will admit that, with respect to madmen, a malady deprives them of their intellectual faculties, but not of their condition as men, nor of course their claim to the beneficence of their Creator. Why then will you not admit the same claim, in those who, sequestered in their infancy from all society, have lived the real life of a savage, deprived of that information which is to be acquired only by conversation with mankind? For it is a demonstrable impossibility, that such a savage should ever raise his ideas to the knowledge of the true God. Reason tells us, that man is punishable only for his wilful errors, and that invincible ignorance can never be imputed to him as a crime. Hence it should follow, that, in the eye of eternal justice, every man, who would have believed, had he had the opportunities

nities of information, will appear as a believer ; and that none will be punished for infidelity but those whose hearts refuse to admit the truth."

Such is the passage as it stands in my book ; on the perusal of which, your error must be evident to every reader. Your mistake lies, in that you understood, or would have others to understand, that, according to my notions, a person must be instructed in the existence of God, to believe in such existence : whereas my sentiments are very different. I say, that a man's understanding must be ripened, and his mind cultivated, to a certain degree, before he is in a capacity to comprehend the proofs of the existence of God, and more particularly so to enable him to discover them himself, without having been informed of them. I speak of barbarians and savages, and you object to me the case of philosophers. I say, that some degree of philosophy is necessary to elevate our minds to the ideas of the true God ; and you quote St. Paul against me, who acknowledges, that the pagan philosophers did acquire ideas of the true God. I say, that some men, of ignorant and uncultivated minds, may not be in a capacity to form just notions of the Deity ; and you say, that people properly instructed may form such notions ; and on these allegations it is that you pronounce my opinion a manifest absurdity. How ! my lord, will you say that, because a professed Civilian ought to understand the laws of his country, it is absurd to suppose a child, who cannot read, can be ignorant of them ?

When a writer is careful to avoid perpetual repetition, and hath once clearly expressed him-

self on any one point, he is not bound to recur always to the same proofs in reasoning on the same subject. The several parts of his writings serve to explain each other; and the latter, if he preserves any method, always suppose the former. This is what I have endeavoured always to do, and have particularly effected, as to the matter in question.

You suppose, with almost all those who treat these subjects, that man comes into the world with a perfect capacity of reasoning, and hath nothing to do but employ it. Now, this is not true; for reason is an acquisition, and that one of the slowest, of the human mind. Man learns to see with his intellectual as well as with his corporeal eyes: but he is much longer about the former than the latter; because the relations between intellectual objects, being not commensurable like those of material bodies, they are discoverable only by estimation, and because our first desires and necessities being merely physical, they do not make the examination of such objects sufficiently interesting. We must learn to view two objects at a time, and to form a comparison between them; we must even learn to compare a variety of objects together, to recur by degrees to their causes, and thence to trace them down to their effects; it is necessary for us to have combined an infinite number and diversity of relations, in order to acquire the ideas of agreement, proportion, harmony, and order. The man who, deprived of the assistance of his fellow-creatures, and incessantly occupied in providing for his necessities, is reduced to the simple progress of his own ideas, will make but little advances in this kind

kind of knowledge; he will grow old and die, without ever emerging from the infancy of reason. Now, can you sincerely believe, my lord, that out of a million of men, living and dying in that manner, there would be one who should attain a thought of God?

The order of the universe, admirable as it is, doth not appear equally so to every eye. The vulgar pay but little attention to it, being in want of that knowledge which is necessary to render it apparent, and having never learned to reflect on what they see. It is neither perverseness, nor obstinacy, that prevent their being sensible of this wonderful harmony of things; it is only ignorance and dulness. The least study fatigues such people, as the least manual labour fatigues the student. They have heard of the works of God and the wonders of nature. They repeat the same words indeed, but without annexing to them the same ideas; and are but little affected by those circumstances that elevate the mind of the philosopher to the contemplation of his Creator. Now if, even among us, the common people, who have the opportunity of so much instruction, are still so very dull and stupid; what must be the case with those poor people, who being left to themselves from their infancy, have learnt nothing from others? Can you believe that an Hottentot, or Laplander, philosophizes much on the revolutions of the planets and the generation of things? And yet the Hottentots and Laplanders, living together in societies, have a multitude of acquired and communicated ideas, by the help of which they may form some gross notions of a Deity. They have some sort

of a catechism ; but a savage, wandering solitarily in the woods, can have none at all. You will say, perhaps, no such creature actually exists ; be it so. He may be supposed, nevertheless, to exist ; and certainly there are men in the world, who never entered into any kind of philosophical conversation in their lives, and whose whole time is spent in seeking out their subsistence, eating and sleeping. What shall we do with these people, the Eskimaux, for example ? Shall we make theologists of them ?

My opinion, therefore, is, that the human mind, such as it comes out of the hands of nature, destitute of instruction and improvement, is not in a capacity of itself to raise its ideas to the sublime conceptions of the Deity ; but that these conceptions present themselves, in proportion as the mind is cultivated and enlightened. I am of opinion that God manifests himself, in his works, to all those who have thought and reflected thereon ; that he reveals himself to every one that is enlightened by knowledge, in the prospect of the universe ; that when our eyes are once opened to his works, we must wilfully shut them, to be blind to their great Author ; that every atheistical philosopher must be insincere, or be blinded by pride ; but that a man, grossly incapacitated, though simple and sincere, whose mind is without error and without vice, may not be able, through involuntary ignorance, to raise his ideas to the author of his being, or form conceptions of God, without being subject to have this ignorance imputed to him as a crime, or being punishable for a fault in which his heart had no share. The one is not enlightened, and the other refuses to be so ; between

tween which there appears to me a very wide difference.

Apply the passage you quoted from St. Paul to this opinion, and you will see that, instead of contradicting, it is perfectly consistent with it: you will see that this passage relates solely to those pretended sages, to whom the things that are to be known of God, have been made manifest; and of whom he says, "the invisible things of him, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are seen by the creation of the world, being considered in his works, to the intent that they should be without excuse. But that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was full of darkness; who, while they professed themselves to be wise, became fools."

The reason, for the apostle's reproaching the philosophers with not having glorified the true God, not being applicable to my supposition, is altogether in my favour; and confirms what I have myself said, "that every philosopher who is an unbeliever is to blame, because he makes a bad use of the understanding he hath cultivated, and is in a capacity of understanding the truths he rejects." It appears, in fine, from the very passage itself, that you did not understand me; and that you charge me with having said what I neither said nor thought; viz. that men believe in God only upon the authority of others*: in which you are so wide of the mark, that, on

* His lordship, indeed, doth not expressly say this; but it is the only meaning I can reasonably annex to his words, supported by those of St. Paul; and I can reply only to what I understand.

the contrary, I have only distinguished between the case wherein men may acquire the knowledge of God of themselves; and that in which they must be obliged to the assistance of others.

But, supposing, my Lord, that you had been right in your criticism, and that you had solidly refuted my opinion, it would not thence follow that such opinion must be palpably absurd, as you are pleased to term it; a man may be mistaken without being extravagant or ridiculous, as every error is not an absurdity. My respect for your lordship makes me more sparing of my epithets: it is not my fault, also, if the reader should supply their omission.

It is thus, my Lord, proceeding always to censure without understanding me, you pass on from one imputation, equally false and important, to another which is more so. After having unjustly accused me of denying the evidence of the Deity, you charge me, still more unjustly, with calling in question his unity. Nay, on this head you go still farther, and take the pains, contrary to your usual custom, of entering into an argument on the subject; the only part of your Mandate, where you have Reason on your side, being that wherein you refute an extravagant position which I never laid down.

The passage you object to is this; or rather the passage in which you relate mine; for the Reader must remember, it is your Lordship that always sets me forth. “I believe, *he makes the same imaginary personage say*, that the world is governed by a wise and powerful Will. I see it, or rather I feel it; and this is of importance for me to know: But is the world eternal, or

is it created? Are things derived from one self-sufficient principle, or are there two or more? And what is their essence? Of all this I know nothing, nor do I see it is of any consequence I should.*—I give up all such idle disquisitions, which serve only to make me discontented with myself, are useless in practice, and above my comprehension."

I must here observe, by the way, that this is the second time you call the Savoyard Curate a chimerical or supposed personage. Pray, my Lord, how do you know this to be the case? I have asserted what I knew; you have ventured to deny what you know nothing of: Which of us is, in this case, the most daring? It is well known, I confess, that there are few Priests who believe in God; it is not therefore proved, however, that there are none at all. But, to proceed with your Mandate.

"What is it this daring Author means to say?—The unity of God appears to him a futile and indeterminate question; as if the notion of a multiplicity of Gods was not the greatest of absurdities. *The plurality of Gods*, says Tertullian very expressively, *tends to the nullity of God*. To admit a God, is to admit a supreme independent Being, to whom all other Beings are subordinate †. This Writer insinuates, therefore, that there are many Gods."

But

* This break indicates an omission of two lines, by which the passage is moderated, and which the Archbishop would not transcribe. See Mandate, page 19, and Emilius, vol. iii. page 47.

† Tertullian is here guilty of a sophism very common with the Fathers. He defines the word *God* after

But who is it says, there are many Gods? Ah! my Lord, you would have been glad, very probably, that I had been guilty of such an absurdity; in which case, you certainly would not have taken the pains to write a Mandate against me.

I neither know how, nor why, things are as they are; and many others, who pique themselves on explaining their causes, know just as little as myself. But I can evidently see, there is but one first moving cause, as every thing clearly tends to the same end. I acknowledge, therefore, the existence of one sole supreme Will, which directs and governs all things; and one sole supreme Power, which animates and influences all things. I attribute this Power and Will to one and the same Being; because of their perfect agreement and union, which is more easily conceived in one than in two; and because it is unreasonable to admit of more Beings than are necessary. And indeed, even the Evil itself, of which we are sensible, is not absolute, and is so far from operating fundamentally against the Good, that it concurs with it to the production of universal harmony.

But the reason why things are, is precisely to be distinguished under two ideas, viz. the thing which makes, and the thing which is made: Nay, it requires some considerable effort of the

after the manner of the Christians, and then accuses the Pagans of contradiction, because, contrary to his definition, they admit of many gods. It was not worth while to impute an error to me which I have not committed, merely to introduce so unseasonably a sophism of Tertullian.

mind, to unite these two ideas in the same object; as we cannot conceive how any thing acts, without supposing, at the same time, the existence of some other Being on which it acts. It is farther certain, that we have ideas of two distinct substances; viz. Matter and Spirit; of a thinking substance and an extended substance; and these two ideas are very easily conceived, the one without the other.

There are, therefore, two methods, in which we may conceive the origin of things, either as they proceed from two different causes, the one alive, the other dead; the one moving, the other moved; the one active, the other passive; the one efficient, the other instrumental: or otherwise, as they are derived from one sole cause, possessed, in itself, of everything which is, and every thing which is made. Neither of these opinions, however, though so long agitated by the metaphysicians, can be easily reconciled to human reason: for, if the eternal and necessary existence of matter hath its difficulties, the creation of it must be attended with no less; the philosophers who have in all ages meditated on this subject, having unanimously rejected the possibility of its creation; except a very small number, perhaps, who appear to have sincerely submitted their reason to authority: though, whether these were truly sincere or not, the motives of interest, ease or security, render justly doubtful; and, indeed, it will be impossible to come to any assurance on this head, so long as we run a risk in speaking the truth.

On the supposition, that things are derived from one sole eternal principle; this principle being simple in its essence, cannot be a compound

pound of matter and spirit, but is either matter or spirit alone. Now, from the deductions of the Savoyard Curate; he cannot conceive, that this principle should be matter; and if it be spirit, he cannot conceive how matter could receive its being from such a cause; for, to this end, it is necessary to conceive its creation: Now, the idea of creation, viz. the idea by which we conceive that, from a simple act of volition, nothing becomes something, is, of all ideas that are not evidently contradictory, the least comprehensible to the human mind.

Beset by such difficulties on both sides, the good Priest remained undetermined, resolving not to perplex himself with doubts of mere speculation, which could have no manner of influence on his moral duties. For, after all, to what purpose should I explain the origin of things, provided I know in what manner they actually subsist; if I know my own place among them, and, in consequence of that, the obligations imposed on me?

But should we even suppose two original principles *, (a supposition, however, which the Curate doth not make) we should not thereby suppose the existence of two Gods; unless, indeed, we supposed, with the Manicheans, that these principles are both active; a doctrine diametrically opposite to that of our Curate, who very positively, and in the most express

* He who knows only two substances, can imagine the existence only of two principles; so that the words, *or more*, annexed, are, in some measure, expletive, serving to intimate, that it is of as little consequence to know the number of these principles as their nature.

terms, admits only of one first intelligence, one active principle, and, of course, but one God.

I must own, indeed, that, the creation of the world being clearly related in our translations of the book of Genesis, to reject that account, would be to reject the authority, if not of the holy Scriptures, at least of the translations given us of them ; and this is the very reason of the Curate's retaining those doubts, which might not have arisen without such authority. For, setting this consideration aside, the co-existence of two principles * serves better to explain the constitution of the universe, and to remove those difficulties which cannot be solved without it ; and particularly, among others, that of the origin of evil. Add to this, that we ought to be perfectly acquainted with the Hebrew tongue, and even to have been contemporary with Moses, to know precisely what sense he attached to the word, which is rendered to us

* It may not be amiss to remark, that this question about the eternity of matter, which so startles our modern Divines, gave but little concern to the Fathers, whose sentiments were more similar to those of Plato. Not to speak of Justin Martyr, Origen, and others, Clement Alexandrine takes the side of the affirmative so strongly in his Hypotyposes, that Photius would have it, on this account, that his book had been interpolated. The same opinion, however, appears again in the Stromates, where Clement relates that of Heraclitus without amendment. This Father, indeed, endeavours, in the fifth book, to establish one sole principle ; but this is because he refuses to give that name to matter, even admitting its eternity.

created.

created. This term is too philosophical to have had originally that known and popular acceptation, which we give it, at present, on the credit of our divines. The acceptation of this term may have been changed, and have mislead even the Septuagint themselves, possessed as they already were with the terms and questions of the Greek Philosophy. Nothing is more common than for words to change their meaning in process of time; and thereby cause us to attribute to ancient authors, who have used them, ideas they never entertained. It is very doubtful whether the Greek word was used in the sense we please to give it; and it is very certain that the Latin term had not the same sense, as Lucretius, who expressly denies the possibility of all *creation*, makes frequent use of the same term to express the formation of the universe and its parts. In fine, M. de Beausobre hath proved, that the notion of Creation is not to be met with in the ancient Jewish Theology; and you have too much learning, my Lord, to be ignorant, that many writers, who have had the greatest respect for the sacred writings, have not been able, nevertheless, to discover the absolute creation of the universe, in the account given by Moses. Thus our Curate, who was not imposed on by the arbitrary authority of the divines, might very well doubt, without being the less orthodox, whether there existed two eternal first principles, or only one.

This is, indeed, a matter purely philological and philosophical, in which revelation hath nothing to do. Be this, however, as it will, this is not a subject of dispute between you and me. I do not undertake to defend the sentiments

ments of the Curate ; but to point out the fallacies and mistakes of your Lordship.

Now, you are totally in the wrong, to advance that the unity of God appeared to me an idle question, and above the human understanding ; as in the very work you condemn, this unity is established and maintained by argument. Again, you are quite wrong in bringing the testimony of Tertullian, to prove against me, that the passage in question implies there are many Gods ; for without having recourse to Tertullian, I agree with you that it doth imply there are many Gods. You are wrong, nevertheless, to call me, on this account, rash and daring : For where there is no positive assertion, there can be no temerity. Is it to be conceived that an author must be stigmatized with presumption, only for being less presumptuous than yourself ?

You are farther wrong in conceiving that you have justified those particular tenets, which attribute human passions to the Deity, and which, so far from clearing up our notions of that Great Being, serve only to obscure and debase them. You are wrong in falsely accusing me of perplexing and debasing those notions ; of contraverting the divine essence which I have not contraverted, and of calling in doubt his unity which I never questioned. But supposing I had done it, what is the consequence ? To recriminate on others, is not to justify one's self ! but he whose sole defence is to accuse the supposed criminal, may very justly be suspected of being the only one who is guilty.

The contradiction you reproach me with, in the same passage, is also as ill founded as the preceding accusation. “ He knows, say you, nothing

nothing of the nature of God, and yet presently after he acknowledges this Supreme Being to be possessed of intelligence, power, will, and goodness; is not this to have an idea of the divine nature?"

The answer I shall make your Lordship on this head is as follows.. "God is intelligent; but in what manner? Man is intelligent by the act of reasoning, but the supreme Intelligence lies under no necessity to reason. He requires neither premises nor consequences; not even the simple form of a proposition: His knowledge is purely intuitive; he beholds equally what is and will be; all truths are to him as one idea, as all places are but one point, and all times one moment. Human power acts by the use of means, the divine power in and of itself. God is powerful because he is willing, his will constituting his power. God is good; nothing is more manifest than this truth; goodness in man, however, consists in a love to his fellow creatures, and the goodness of God in a love of order: For it is on such order that the connection and preservation of all things depend. Again, God is just; this I am fully convinced of, as it is the natural consequence of his goodness. The injustice of men is their own work, not his; and that moral disorder, which, in the judgment of some philosophers, makes against the system of providence, is in mine the strongest argument for it. Justice in man, indeed, is to render every one his due; but the justice of God requires, at the hands of every one, an account of the talents with which he has entrusted him.

In the discovery, however, by the force of reason, of those divine attributes, of which I have

have no absolute idea, I only affirm what I do not clearly comprehend, which is in effect to affirm nothing. I may say, it is true, that God is this or that; I may be sensible of it, and fully convinced within myself that he is so. I am yet never the better able to conceive how, or in what manner he is so.

In short, the greater efforts I make to contemplate his infinite essence, the less I am able to conceive it: But I am certain that he is, and that is sufficient; the more he surpasses my conceptions, the more I adore him. I humble myself before him, and say, "Being of Beings, "I am, because thou art; to meditate continually on thee is to elevate my thoughts to the fountain of existence. The most meritorious use of my reason is to be annihilated before thee: It is the delight of my soul to feel my weak faculties overcome by the splendor of thy greatness."

Such is my answer, and I flatter myself it is satisfactory. Will it be necessary for me to tell your Lordship from whence it is taken? I have taken it, word for word, from the very passage, wherein you accuse me of contradiction*; and you have made just such a use of it, as all my adversaries do, who transcribe the objections I myself raise, and suppress my solutions. Their answer is therefore already written, and is contained in the work they refute. But we advance, my Lord, to the discussion of matters of the utmost importance.

After having attacked my system, and my book, you make an attack also on my religion; and because the Roman Catholick Curate had

* Emilius, Vol. iii. page 73.

objections against his church, you endeavour to make me pass for an enemy to mine ; as if, to propose the difficulties attending any particular opinion, were to renounce it ; as if all human knowledge had not its particular difficulties ; as if even Geometry itself were entirely free from them, or that the Geometricians made it a rule to be silent, lest they should depreciate the certainty of their art.

The answer I have ready to make, is to declare, with my usual frankness and sincerity, my sentiments with respect to religion ; such as I have constantly professed them to be in all my writings, and such as they have always been both on my lips and in my heart. Nay, I will go still farther, and declare why I published the Curate's creed ; and why, in spite of all the clamours that have been raised against it, I shall ever esteem it to be the best and most useful performance this age hath produced. Neither persecution, nor arrets, shall ever make me change my tone ; the Divines, in bidding me be humble, shall not make me an hypocrite ; nor shall the Philosophers, by taxing me with hypocrisy, make me profess myself an infidel. I will speak of my religion, because I have one. And I will speak of it boldly, because I have the courage to declare what it is ; and it were to be wished, for the happiness of mankind, it were that of the whole human race.

My Lord, I am a Christian, a sincere Christian, according to the doctrine of the Gospel. I am a Christian, not as a disciple of Priests, but as a disciple of Jesus Christ. My great master refined but little on doctrinal tenets, but insisted strongly on moral obligations. He prescribed fewer articles of Faith than good works ; he commanded

commanded us to believe only so much as is necessary to make us good. When he superseded the Law and the Prophets, it was more by acts of virtue than articles of Belief. And he hath told me, as well in his own words, as by those of his Apostles, "That whoso loveth his brother hath fulfilled the Law."

With regard to myself, being firmly convinced of the essential truths of Christianity, which are the foundation of all good morality, I endeavour to nourish my heart with the spirit of the Gospel, without perplexing my head about what appears in it dark and obscure; and being as fully persuaded, that whosoever loveth God above all things, and his neighbour as himself, is a true Christian, I strive to prove myself such, laying aside all those doctrinal subtilties, those important trifles with which the Pharisees so perplex our duty and confound our belief; placing, with St. Paul, even Faith itself below Charity.

Happy in having been educated in a religion the most rational and pure upon earth, I remain inviolably attached to the worship of my fathers: Like them, I take scripture and reason for the only rules of Faith: Like them, I pay no implicit regard to human authority, nor subscribe to their formulas till I perceive the truth of them: Like them, I heartily join with the true servants of Jesus Christ, and the real worshipers of God, to pay him homage, with the communion of the faithful, in his church. It is pleasing and consolatory, to be numbered among its members, to assist in this publick worship of the Deity, and to reflect, while I am in the midst of them, here am I with my brethren.

Penetrated with due respect for a worthy pastor, who, resisting the torrent of example, and
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judging in the truth, hath not excluded from his church, a defender of God's cause, I shall preserve to the latest hour of my life a grateful remembrance of charity so truly christian. I shall ever think it an honour to be numbered among his flock, and hope never to bring a scandal on its members, either by my sentiments, or conduct. But when injurious Priests arrogate to themselves a power to which they have no just pretensions, when they take upon them to dictate what I shall believe, and insolently bid me explain this, disown that, retract my words, or disguise my meaning; their arrogance hath no effect on my sincerity; they cannot make me be guilty of falsehood in order to be orthodox, or say what I do not think merely to please them. And tho' my veracity may give them so much offence as to make them eager to cut me off from the church, I am little terrified by a menace, which it is not in their power to put in execution. They cannot prevent my heart from being united to the faithful; they cannot blot out my name from among the elect, if it be written in that number. They may deprive me, indeed, of many of the comforts of this life, but they cannot deprive me of my hope in that which is to come; where it is my most sincere and ardent wish to have Jesus Christ himself the umpire and judge between them and me.

Such, my Lord, are my real sentiments; which, however, I do not lay down as a rule for others, but only declare them to be mine, and that such they will remain, as long as it pleases, not men, but God, who alone is capable of changing my heart and mind. For

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so long as I may be what I am, and think as I now do, I shall speak as I now speak. Very different, I must own, is this conduct to that of your nominal Christians; who are always ready to believe, or to say, what their ease, or interest, require them to say or believe; being satisfied they are good Christians enough, provided their writings are not burnt, and no arret be issued out against them. They live like people firmly persuaded, that it is not merely necessary they should confess this or that article, but that such confession is sufficient to entitle them to heaven; whereas I am persuaded, on the contrary, that the essential part of religion consists in the discharge of practical duty, and that it is not merely necessary that a man should be just, compassionate, humane, and charitable, but that whoever is truly so, believes enough for his salvation. As for the rest, indeed, I must own their doctrine is much more commodious than mine, and that it would cost a man much less trouble to get himself ranked among the number of the faithful for his opinions than for his virtues.

Whether I ought to have kept my sentiments on these matters to myself, as it is incessantly told me, or whether, when I had the courage to publish and own them, I attacked the laws and disturbed the peace of society, we shall enquire presently. But before I enter on this enquiry, permit me to entreat your Lordship, and every reader of this letter, to place some confidence in the solemn declarations of a friend to truth, and not to follow the example of those, who, without proof or probability, and solely on the suggestions of their own hearts, accuse me of atheism and irreligion, and that in contra-

dition to the most serious and positive protestations, and which nothing on my part ever rendered suspected. I should not think I have the appearance of a man who disguises his sentiments; nor is it easy to see what interest I can have in so doing. It ought to be presumed, at least, that a man, who expresses himself so freely concerning what he doth not believe, must be sincere in what he actually professes; and that when his conversation, his actions, and his writings all perfectly agree on this head, whoever shall dare to affirm, he is guilty of falsehood, without having the omniscience of the Deity, must be guilty of a notorious falsehood himself.

I had not always the happiness of a retired life; I have mixed with people of all characters, have known men of all parties, believers of all sects, and freethinkers of all systems. I have seen the high and the low, the libertine and the philosopher. I have had friends who have been sincere, and others who were not so: I have been beset with spies and with enemies; and the world is full of people who hate me for the injuries they have done me. I conjure them all, notwithstanding, of what kind soever, publickly to declare, what they know of my belief as to matters of religion; to declare, whether during the most constant familiarity, the most intimate connection, whether in the midst of convivial gaiety, or in the most secret confidence of private conversation, they ever found me different from myself in this respect. Let them declare, if, when they were pleased to rally or argue with me, they found me at any time affected with their arguments or raileries; if they ever caught me varying in my

my sentiments, or if they could discover any thing in the bottom of my heart, which I concealed from the public. Let them say, if, at any time whatever, they have found in me even the shadow of imposture or hypocrisy; let them declare what they know, and expose me to the world. I not only consent to it, but beg them to do it; dispensing with every obligation they may think themselves under to the contrary. Let them speak out boldly, not what they would have me be, but what they know I am. Let them judge of me from their consciences; I am not afraid to trust my honour in their hands, and promise to take no exceptions at what they may truly aver.

Let those who charge me with the want of religion, because they themselves have none, and cannot conceive how others can have any; let these, I say, first agree, if they can, among themselves. Some of them discover only an atheistical system in my works; others again pretend, that in my writings I aim at glorifying God without believing in him in my heart. They tax my writings with impiety, and my sentiments with hypocrisy. But if I publicly teach atheism, I am not in that, according to their notions, an hypocrite; and if I affect to believe what I do not, in that I inculcate no impiety. Thus by comparing their contradictory imputations, their calumny exposes itself; but malevolence is blind, and passion is incapable of reason. I do not, indeed, pretend to that degree of faith, which is so much the boast of persons of indifferent probity, that implicit belief, which hesitates at nothing, but readily admits of every thing that is proposed to it, and

throws aside, or dissembles concerning those objections it cannot resolve. I have not the happiness to see in revelation the evidence they pretend to find there; and if I declare myself in its favour, it is because my heart induces me to it, because it presents nothing to me but consolation, and because there appear to me as many difficulties in rejecting it; but it is not because its evidence appears to me demonstrative; for in reality it doth not. Indeed I am not sufficiently learned ever to understand a demonstration, which requires such profound erudition, to deduce and comprehend. Is it not, however, very whimsical to conclude, that I, who openly profess my doubts and objections, am an hypocrite, and that those people who are so very positive, and who decide so absolutely on most points, and are so certain of every thing, without having better proof than myself; that those people, in short, who are not a jot more learned than I am, and who, without obviating my objections, reproach me with proposing them, should be accounted sincere?

But to what end should I be a hypocrite, and what should I gain by it? I have openly made an attack on particular interests, have stirred up all parties against me; the cause of God and of humanity, is what I have maintained, and who is there concerns himself about that? What I have written on this subject hath not made the least impression; nor is there a soul who thinks himself obliged to me for it. Had I declared myself openly in favour of atheism, the devotees could not have used me worse, and my other enemies, not less dangerous, would not have given my reputation such frequent stabs in secret.

secret. Had I declared myself openly in favour of atheism, the one party would have attacked me with more reserve, in seeing me defended by the other, and observing me disposed in myself to revenge: But a man who fears God, is himself little to be feared; his party is not formidable; he is alone, or nearly so, and the world may safely do him a great deal of wrong, before he will think of returning it. Had I declared myself openly in favour of atheism, in thus separating myself from the church, I should at once have deprived its Ministers of the means of incessantly harrassing me, and making me bear all the little airs of their ecclesiastical tyranny: I should not have been subject to so many idle censures; but instead of so furiously condemning my writings, they would have been under the necessity of refuting them, which would not have been quite so easy. In short, had I declared myself open'y in favour of atheism, they would at first have made a little clamour, which would have soon subsided, and I should have been soon at peace, as have been all others; the people of God would have taken no cognizance of me, nor thought they did me a favour, in not treating me as a person excommunicated; so that I should thus have been quit with the world. The Saints of Israel would not have writ me anonymous letters, venting their charity in pious abuses; they would not have taken the trouble to assure me, in all meekness and humility, that I was a wicked wretch, an execrable monster, and that it had been but too happy for the world, had some good Christian but taken care to stifle me in my cradle. Again, the well-meaning part of mankind, regarding me, on their part, as a reprobate,

would never have tormented themselves, or me, to bring me back into the right way; they would not have pulled me to the right and to the left, nor have wearied me out with their remonstrances; they would not have reduced me to the necessity of commending their zeal, while I condemned their importunity, or of gratefully acknowledging they were called, to plague me to death with their good-will.

No, my Lord, to be an hypocrite, I must be both a madman and a fool; I should be mad to turn impostor for any thing I require of mankind; and a consummate fool, not to see that the method I have taken, could lead only to misfortunes in this life; and that, if even I might reap some advantages by it, I could not do it without contradicting myself. It is not too late, indeed, to take these advantages now; I need only bring myself to impose on the world for a moment, and I might triumph over my enemies. I am not as yet arrived at old age, and may possibly have long to suffer; the public opinion respecting me may change once again: But if ever I arrive at honours or fortune, by whatever means I may attain them, I shall then be assuredly an hypocrite.

A friend to truth doth not stake his reputation on one opinion, or another; whatever he says, provided it be what he thinks, conduces to his purpose. He who is interested only in being sincere, hath no temptation to deceive; and there is no man of common sense, who doth not prefer the most simple method when it is also the most certain. My enemies may make the most of their abuse; they will not be able to deprive me of the honour of being a man who speaks truth on all occasions; of being
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the only author of these times, as well as of many preceding ages, that hath written sincerely, and hath said only what he believed. They may, for a while, sully my reputation by dint of false reports and calumnies; it will, sooner or later, however, triumph over them; for, while they will be varying in their ridiculous imputations, I shall remain the same, and, without any other art than my native frankness, shall have it always in my power to disappoint them.

“ But this frankness, it may be said, is unreasonable, with regard to the publick. The truth is not to be spoken at all times: And tho’ sensible people may be of your opinion, it is not proper the vulgar should adopt such sentiments.” Such are the reflections which are made me on all sides; and perhaps such is the reflection you yourself would make me, were we alone in your closet. Such changeable creatures are men! They vary their language as they do their habit, and speak the truth only in their night-gowns. When they are dressed, they are equipped only to deceive, and are not only knaves and impostors in the face of the world, but are not ashamed to punish, against the dictates of their own consciences, every one who dares not be as knavish and deceitful as themselves. But is the maxim itself true, that truth ought not to be spoken at all times? or rather, that all truth ought not to be divulged? Were it also true; would it thence follow that no error should be disproved? or that the extravagancies of mankind are so sacred, that we should respect them all without exception? This is a point which ought to be examined,

mined, before I admit so vague and suspicious a maxim; which, were it true in itself, might be rendered false by misapplication. I have a great inclination, my Lord, to adopt here my usual method, and to give the history of my ideas, as a reply to my accusers; for I conceive, I cannot more fully justify all I have dared to say, than by repeating all I have dared to think.

No sooner was I of an age to observe mankind, than I took notice of their actions, and listened to their discourse; when, seeing their behaviour agreed but little with their conversation, I endeavoured to find out the reason of that difference; and discovered, that to be and to appear, were two things as different as those of speaking and acting; this latter difference being the cause of the former, and arising itself from a cause which remains to be pointed out.

This I found to exist in the present defective state of society, in every respect contrary to nature, which nothing can totally suppress; incessantly tyrannizing over her, and forcing her to reclaim her just rights. I traced the consequences of this contradiction, and saw that it was alone sufficient to account for all the vices of individuals, and all the evils of society. Hence I concluded, it was unnecessary to suppose men naturally wicked, when I could thus trace the origin and progress of their depravity. These reflections naturally conducted me to farther researches into the human mind, considered in a state of civil society; in which I found that the cultivation of science, and the propagation of vice, went hand in hand together, and increased in the same proportion, not indeed with regard to individuals, but to a whole people; a distinction which I have always been careful to
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make, though none of my opponents have attended to it.

I sought the truth in books; but there I found nothing but falshood and errors. I consulted authors themselves; but these were mere quacks, who diverted themselves with imposing on mankind; who had no rule of action but self-interest, and had no other God than reputation; ever ready to decry and calumniate the great who did not treat them as they pleased, and still more ready to lavish panegyric indiscriminately on those who might hire them.

By attending on those who were authorized to speak in public, I soon found they were either afraid or unwilling to say any thing disagreeable to those by whom they were authorized; and that, being hired by the Strong to direct the Weak, they could only speak to the latter of their duties, and to the former of their privileges. Thus public instruction will always tend to imposture, so long as those who administer it find their interest in deceit; and it is for them only that the truth is not proper to be spoken. But wherefore should I be an accomplice with men of this stamp?

Are there any public prejudices which ought to be respected? This may possibly be; but it must be when those prejudices are so intimately connected with the order of society, that they cannot be eradicated without rooting up, at the same time, those things by which they are counteracted; so that it may be expedient to permit the evil, on account of the good. But when things are brought to such a situation, that every change must be for the better, can there be any prejudices so respectable, that we must

sacrifice to them, reason, virtue, justice, and all the benefits, which truth may be productive of, to mankind? For my part, I have engaged myself to speak the truth, whenever it may be useful, as far as it is in my power: This is an engagement also which I ought to fulfil, to the utmost of my abilities, and which no one can fulfil in my stead; because every one being equally bound to all, no one can discharge the obligation of another. “Divine truth, saith St. Augustin, is neither mine, yours, nor his, but belongs to us all, on whom it forcibly calls to act in concert, to make it known to the world, under the penalty of being useless to ourselves, if we do not communicate it to others: for whoever would appropriate to himself a blessing which God would have every one enjoy, loses by that very usurpation the good of which he robs the public, and finds himself involved in error, for having betrayed the truth.”

Mankind ought not to be instructed by halves. If they ought to remain in error, why ought they not to be left in ignorance? To what purpose are there so many schools and universities, to teach them what they ought not to know? What is the design of your colleges, your academies, and so many other learned institutions? Is it merely to amuse and deceive the public, by vitiating their reason, and preventing their discovery of the truth? Yes, ye Professors of Falshood, it is to abuse, that ye pretend to instruct us, and, like the merciless robbers who hang up lanthorns on the rocks to deceive the unhappy mariner, ye light us on to destruction.

Such were my notions when I first took up the pen, and in laying it down, I have no reason
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to change my sentiments. I have always observed, that the mode of public instruction had two essential defects, which it is impossible to remove. The one is, the insincerity of the instructors ; and the other, the blindness of the instructed. If men without passions were to instruct men without prejudices, their knowledge might indeed be more confined, but it would be more certain, and reason would always bear the sway. Now, the interest of publick instructors will be ever the same, but the prejudices of the people, having no fixed foundation, are variable, and may be altered, perverted, augmented, or diminished. It is only on this side, therefore, that instruction can have any certain hold of mankind, and it is to this every friend to truth should incline. He may have some hope of making the people more reasonable, but can have none of making their leaders more honest.

I have seen the same deceit prevail in religion as in politicks, and have been much more concerned at it. The evils of government may render its subjects miserable only upon earth ; but who knows how far mistakes in point of conscience may not be injurious to unhappy mortals hereafter ? I have observed the world full of creeds, tenets, and modes of worship, all followed without any real belief therein ; and have seen that, nothing of all these affecting either the understanding or the heart, they had but very little influence on moral conduct. I must speak to you, my Lord, on this head, without disguise. The true believer cannot accommodate himself to this grimace : He is sensible that man is an intelligent being, requiring a reasonable worship, and that he is a social being, whose system of morals should be adapted to the purposes

of humanity. Let us find, in the first place, this worship and this morality; which would be applicable to mankind in general: If, after this, it be requisite to distinguish them into national forms, we should examine into their foundations, relations, and conveniencies, and, after having determined what are the religion and morality of the man, determine what are those of the citizen. In doing this, we should be particularly careful not to imitate your good friend M. *Joli de Fleury*, who, to establish his Jansenism, would root up all natural law and moral obligation: so that, according to him, a contract between a Christian and an Infidel must be void, because there is no law common to both.

Hence I saw there were two methods of examining and comparing different religions; the one relative to the truth and falshood they contained, either with regard to the natural and supernatural facts on which they were established, or with regard to the ideas we derive from reason, of the Supreme Being, and the religious worship he requires of us: The other relative to their moral and temporal effects upon earth, according to the good or evil they might be of to society, and to mankind. Now, we must not, in order to prevent this two-fold examination, begin by affirming, that both these things go together, and that the truest religion is also the most salutary for society; this being precisely the point in question: nor ought men to raise an outcry of impiety and atheism against those who treat this question; as it is one thing to believe, and another to examine into the effects of our belief.

It appears very certain, indeed, that if man
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be naturally formed for society, the truest religion must be also the most social and humane; for God would certainly have us to be what he made us; and if it be true that we are naturally wicked, we should be disobedient to him in wishing to be otherwise. Add to this, that religion, considered as a kind of relation between God and man, cannot contribute to the glory of the former, but by the happiness of the latter; because the other term of the relation, which is God, is above every thing that man can do either for or against it.

This opinion, however, probable as it is, is subject to great difficulties, on account of historical facts which contradict each other. The Jews were enemies by birth to all other people, and founded their own establishment on the destruction of seven nations, according to the express orders which they received from God. Again, the Christians have had their holy wars, and war is undoubtedly destructive to mankind: All parties have persecuted and been persecuted in their turn, and persecution is undoubtedly hurtful to mankind: Many sects of them profess, and make a merit of celibacy; but celibacy is undoubtedly so hurtful to mankind, that if it were adopted universally, the whole human race must perish *. If these considerations be not sufficient to

* Chastity and continence have their use, even with regard to population; it is always good to have the command over one's self; hence a state of virginity is always respectable: but it does not thence follow, that it is good or commendable to persevere in that state during life, in contradiction to nature and the end of our being. We have generally more respect

to authorize us to decide concerning religion, they afford a sufficient reason for us to examine into it; and I require nothing else but permission to make this examination. I neither say nor think, that there is no good religion upon earth; but I affirm, and it is but too true, that there never has been a religion publickly established which hath not given the most cruel wounds to humanity. All parties have occasionally tormented their fellow creatures, and offered human sacrifices to the Deity. Whatever may be the source of these contradictions, certain it is they subsist; and can it be a crime to wish their removal? Chastity never thirsts after blood, nor

respect for a marriageable girl than for a young married woman; but we have more for a mother of a family than for an old maid; and this appears to me very reasonable. As we do not marry so soon as we are born, nor is it proper to marry very young, a state of virginity, which all ought to support and esteem, is useful and necessary, as it is salutary and honourable; but it is so only with a view, at a proper time, to bestow its purity on that of marriage. How! will it be said, with an air of triumphant raillery, do these old batchelors pretend to preach up the obligations of matrimony? Why do not they themselves marry? Very true, why do they not, indeed? It is because your absurd institutions have made a state, which is sacred and delightful in itself, so ridiculous and unhappy, that it is almost impossible to support it without being either a knave or a fool. Ye sceptres of iron, absurd laws! it is you whom we may reproach for our not having fulfilled our duties on earth: it is from us the cry of nature is heard against your barbarity. How can you presumptuously reproach us with the misery to which you have reduced us?

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doth the love of one's neighbour inspire us with the thoughts of massacre. In like manner, it is not zeal for the salvation of souls that is the cause of persecution; pride, arrogance, and self-love are the cause. The more unreasonable any religion is, the more it is propagated by force: He who professes absurd tenets, cannot bear that others should see them represented in their true light. Reason, in such a case, becomes the greatest of crimes, and must, at all events, be suppressed, as men are ashamed to want it in the eyes of others. Thus absurdity and persecution have the same source. Mankind must be constantly terrified and intimidated. Leave them a moment to the use of their reason, and you are undone.

On this consideration alone, it appears to me an act of public good, to instruct people, under such circumstances, to reason on the subject of religion: for by so doing, they are instructed in their moral obligations, persecution is deprived of its sting, and humanity is restored to its native rights. To this end, however, it is necessary to recur to general principles, to such as are common to all mankind; for if, when you begin to reason, you lay any stress on the authority of Priests, you put a sword into her hand, and furnish her with the means of persecution.

Those who love peace also should never recur to the authority of books. This is the way never to come to any determination. Books have been the source of inexhaustible disputes. Take a view of the histories of nations; and you will find that such as had no books had no disputes among them. Would you subject mankind to human authority, they would all be so differently affected by it, that tho' every one
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should be possessed of the greatest sincerity and the soundest judgment, it would be impossible for them ever to agree. Never reason, therefore, on the maxims or arguments of others. Human language is not sufficiently clear and explicit: Not even God himself, should he deign to speak to us after our mode of speech, could say any thing which would not afford us some occasion for dispute.

Our languages are the work of men, and men are creatures of confined talents. Our languages are the work of men, and men are deceitful. Hence, as there is no truth so clearly announced, but that chicanery will find it in some degree equivocal, so there is no falsehood so gross that it may not be supported by some pretended reasoning.

We will suppose, for instance, that a man should surprize us at midnight, by declaring it to be broad day; our surprize would, doubtless, be accompanied with laughter, and we should treat him with ridicule; but give him only time and means to establish a sect, and sooner or later you would see his partizans labouring to prove that he was in the right. They would say, that when he pronounced it was day, it certainly was so in some part of the world or other; and nothing could be more true. Others again might refine upon the assertion, and maintain, that, as there are always some particles of light scattered up and down in the atmosphere, it is day-light even all night long. And thus a number of subtle casuists joining in the dispute, they would presently make you see the sun shine at midnight. This evidence, indeed, might not prevail universally; the debate degenerating, according to custom, into cruelty and bloodshed.

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One party would be for the explication, another against it; one would be for taking the matter in a figurative sense, and the other in a simple one. Some would say, he affirmed at midnight, that it was then day, and it was night. Others would say, he affirmed at midnight that it was day, and it was day. Each would tax his opponent with insincerity and obstinacy: A battle or massacre must end the dispute; streams of blood would flow on all sides; and if the new sect should in the end be victorious, it would be demonstrated that it is day at midnight. Such is the history of almost all the quarrels that have arisen about religion.

The innovations of most religious sectaries have been established by fanaticism, and maintained by hypocrisy: hence it is that they are so repugnant to reason and virtue. Enthusiasm never reasons; so that, whilst its frenzy lasts, any thing goes down, nor is it very nice about articles of faith. Its method also is extremely convenient; doctrines are so easily adapted, and morals so difficult to practise, that, taking the easiest way, they supply the want of good works by the merit of an implicit faith. But after all, fanaticism is a critical state which cannot last for ever. It hath its fits long and short, more or less frequent; and hath its intermissions, during which indifference prevails. During these intervals, the believer comes a little to himself, and is astonished to find himself surrounded with such a heap of absurdities. But the religion is established, its forms prescribed, laws are enacted in support of them, and transgressions are punished. Who will venture to stand up, of himself, to protest against all these? to except against the laws of his country, and deny the religion.

religion of his fathers ? It is held more prudent to submit in silence ; it is our interest to be of the opinion of those whose possessions we are to inherit. Every one acts the same farce, therefore, with his neighbours ; laughing in his sleeve at what he affects publicly to revere. Such, my Lord, is the behaviour of the greater part of the professors of most religions, and particularly of yours ; and such is my key to the inconsistency, which is so remarkable between their doctrines and their practice. Their belief is all affectation, and their manners the same as their faith.

Why is it that one man is interested to take cognizance of the belief of another, or the state of that of the citizens ? It is, doubtless, because it is supposed, that our faith hath an influence on our morals, and that on our ideas of the life to come, depends our conduct in the present. But, if this be not the case, of what consequence is our belief, or the affectation of it ? The appearance of religion is no longer of any other use than to dispense with the reality.

In a state of society, every one is entitled to inform himself, whether another believes himself under any obligation to be just ; the sovereign having the right to examine into the reasons on which every one founds such obligation. Add to this, that established national forms ought to be observed ; this is what I have particularly insisted on. But with regard to opinions merely speculative, and that have no influence on morals, and which do not tend to the transgression of the laws ; every person should be at liberty to think as he pleased, nor would any one be either entitled, or interested, to dictate their sentiments to others. Thus, for example, should
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any person, tho' invested with authority, come to ask me my opinion concerning the famous question of the hypostatical union ; of which the Bible says not a word, tho' so many grown children have held councils, and so many unhappy men have suffered on that account ; I should civilly desire him, after having owned I did not understand, nor give myself any concern about the matter, to trouble himself about his own business ; and, if he still persisted, I should take my leave of him.

This is the only principle, on which any thing determinate and equitable can be deduced from disputes about religion ; and without which, every one laying down, on his part, the thing in question, nothing is agreed on, or understood ; while religion, which ought to contribute to the happiness of mankind, is productive of their greatest evils.

But as religions grow old, they lose sight of the object they had first in view ; they increase in subtilties, while every thing is to be understood, explained, and determined ; thus the doctrine grows daily refined, and the moral practices of it as constantly decay. There is undoubtedly a wide difference between the spirit of Deuteronomy and that of the Talmud ; between the spirit of the Gospel and the quarrels about the Constitution. St. Thomas asks, and determines it in the affirmative, Whether articles of faith do not multiply, by process of time ? That is to say, the successive professors, refining upon one another, come in time to know much more than hath been said by Jesus Christ and his Apostles. St. Paul ingenuously confesses, " that he saw things, but as through a glass darkly, and in part."

part." Our Theologues have made a much greater progress; they see every thing, know every thing; they have cleared up all the obscurities of Scripture; have determined what appeared indeterminate; and have shewn us, with their usual modesty, that the sacred writers stood in great need of their assistance to become intelligible, and that the Holy Spirit knew not how to explain itself clearly without them.

When men have lost sight of their moral duties, to busy themselves only about the opinions and frivolous disputes of Priests, a Christian is no longer asked, if he believes in God, but if he be orthodox? he is required to subscribe to a set form of useless and sometimes unintelligible tenets; and when he hath so done, all is well, he is asked no farther questions. Provided he doth nothing to get himself hanged, he may live almost as he pleases; his morals are nothing to the purpose, his belief is secure. When religion is come to this pass, of what use is it to society, or advantage to individuals? It serves only to stir up dissensions, troubles, and quarrels, of every kind, among them; and to set them a cutting each others throats about the solution of ænigmas. Certainly it would be better to have no religion at all, than a religion so egregiously misapplied. Let us preserve it, if possible, from degenerating to that point, and be assured, in spite of chains and persecution, that you will do a meritorious service to mankind.

Let us suppose that, wearied out with such destructive quarrels, mankind should assemble to put an end to them, and agree about a religion adapted to the different people on earth. Every
one

one would begin, undoubtedly, by proposing his own, as the only true, rational, and demonstrable religion ; as the only one agreeable to God and useful to man : But his proofs would by no means confirm his persuasions, at least in the opinion of other sects. Each party would have no voice but its own. It is no less certain that all the others would unite against it. In this manner the deliberation might go round, one proposing, and all the rest rejecting ; this would never be the way to come to an agreement. It is to be conceived, therefore, that after much time lost in such puerile altercations, men of sense would seek the means of conciliation. To this end, they would begin by banishing all professed divines from the assembly ; nor would it be difficult for them to see how indispensable this preliminary step would be. This good work being done, they would say to the rest ; Till you can agree upon some one principle, it is impossible you should even understand each other ; and it is an argument by which no person ever was convinced, to say you are in the wrong because I am in the right. You say, this is right, because it is agreeable to God ; but this is precisely the very thing in question. If we knew what religion was most agreeable to him, there would be no farther dispute between us. You say that is right, because it is useful to mankind. This is quite another thing. Men may judge of this particular. Let us take this utility, therefore, as our guide ; and proceed to establish those doctrines which are most conducive to it. We may thus hope to come as near the truth as it is possible : For it is to be presumed that, whatever is most useful to his creatures, must be most agreeable to the Creator.

“ Let

“ Let us see, then, if there be any natural affinity between us; if there be any thing held in common by us all. Ye Jews, what think you of the origin of mankind? We think they are all the offspring of one common father. And, you Christians, what is your opinion on this subject? The same as that of the Jews. And, you Turks, what say you? We think the same as the Jews and Christians.—Very well, so far is good, as men are all brothers, they ought undoubtedly to love each other as such.

“ But of whom, say you, did our common father receive his being? For he certainly did not make himself.—Of the Creator of heaven and earth. Jews, Turks, and Christians all agree in this: here is another great point gained. Again, of man, the work of this Creator, is he a simple or compound being? Is he formed of one substance, or of many? Answer, ye Christians! He is composed of two substances, the one mortal, and the other immortal.—And you Turks! We think the same.—And you Jews! We had formerly but confused ideas of this matter, as may be seen by the expressions of the sacred writings; but we have been since enlightened; and at present are of the same opinion as the Christians.”

In proceeding thus, by way of interrogatories, on divine providence, the life to come, and other matters essential to the peace of society, and the good of mankind; and having obtained almost uniform answers from every one, the querists would say to them (By the way, it is to be remembered that the Priests are banished the assembly;) “ Wherefore, my friends, do you thus torment yourselves? You appear to be all agreed as to those points which are of conse-

quence for you to know ; and tho' you may differ in sentiment as to other matters, I see very little inconvenience. Draw up a few articles of an universal religion, which may be called, if you will, the humane and social creed, and which every person living in society may be obliged to receive. And if any one should speak or write against it, he should be banished from society, as an enemy to its fundamental laws. As to those matters on which you are not all agreed, form of your particular creeds so many national religions, and profess them in sincerity and truth ; but do not go on tormenting yourselves, in order to make other nations receive them, as you may rest assured God Almighty doth not require this at your hands. For it is as unjust to insist on subjecting others to your opinions as to your laws ; missionaries appearing to me to be just as wise as conquerors.

“ In pursuing each your different doctrines, however, cease to imagine them so fully demonstrated, that those who do not look upon them in that light are insincere. Cease to believe, that all those who examine your proofs and reject their evidence, are for that reason obstinate Infidels, whose incredulity is criminal. Cease to think, that reason, a regard for truth, and sincerity are confined to yourselves. Do what we will, we are always induced to treat those as enemies, whom we accuse of wilfully resisting the force of evidence. We may lament their error, but we hate their obstinacy. Give the preference to your own reasons, if you will ; but always remember that such as are not converted by them, may also have theirs.

“ Honour, in general, all the founders of your respective modes of worship. Let every one

Pay

pay the reverence, which he conceives due to that of his own ; but let him not despise those of others. They might be men of great genius and great virtues ; and these are always respectable. They have declared themselves messengers from God ; this might be, might or might not ; it is a subject which the generality of mankind cannot judge of, in an uniform and consistent manner, the proofs of it not being equally adapted to the comprehension of all. But, tho' this be the case, they should not be hastily treated as impostors. Who knows how far continual meditations on the Deity, or the enthusiasm of virtue, may have disturbed, in their sublime imaginations, the mean and regular order of their common ideas ? A too great elevation of mind sometimes turns the brain, and things are no longer seen in their ordinary light. Socrates himself imagined he had a familiar ; but no one hath dared, on that account, to accuse him of being a knave. Shall we treat the founders of a whole people, the benefactors of nations, with less regard than a particular individual ?

“ In a word, let there be no more disputes among you, about the preference due to your several religions. They are all good, when they are established by law, and contain what is essential to your happiness. The form or mode of worship, is the police of religions, and not its essence, and it belongs to the Sovereign of every country to regulate it.”

I have thought, my Lord, that a person, who should reason thus, would not be, therefore, a blasphemer, or impious ; but that the conciliatory expedient he might thus propose, would be just, rational, and useful to mankind. I

did not think, also, that it would prevent his having a particular religion or mode of worship, any more than other people, or his being as sincerely attached to it. A true believer, knowing that an infidel is also a man, and probably an honest one, may, without a crime, interest himself in his fate. He may justly prevent the introduction of any foreign mode of worship in his country; but let him not consign to damnation all those who think differently from himself; for whoever pronounces so rash a judgment, becomes a professed enemy to the whole human race. I am constantly told, that civil toleration should be admitted, but not a theological: for my part, I am of a contrary opinion, and believe that a good moral man, be his religion what it will, may be saved. But I do not, for that reason think it lawful to introduce foreign modes of worship in any country, without the permission of its Sovereign: For tho' it may not be directly to disobey God, it is to disobey the laws, and disobedience to the laws is disobedience to God.

With regard to such religions as are once established or tolerated in any country, I conceive it is both cruel and unjust to suppress them by violence, and that the Sovereign is his own enemy, who injures the religious sectaries of his country. There is a wide difference between embracing a new religion, and professing that in which we are born and bred: It is the first only that can in any shape be criminal. One ought neither to establish a diversity of religions, nor suppress those which are once established: For a son cannot be to blame in adopting the religion of his father. All the arguments in be-

half of public tranquillity make against the advocate for persecution. Religion never causes any troubles in a state, unless when the prevailing party would oppress the weak, or when the weaker party, being of a persecuting spirit, cannot live in peace with any other. But no lawful worship, that is to say, a worship comprehending any thing of the essence of religion, the professors of which require of course nothing but peace and toleration, ever gave rise to rebellions or civil wars; unless when it was forced to act in its own defence and repel its persecutors. Never did the Protestants, for instance, take up arms in France, unless when they have been persecuted. Had they been permitted, they would have been contented to live in peace and quiet. I must frankly confess, indeed, that the reformed religion had at first no right of establishment in France contrary to the laws. But when, transmitted from fathers to children, it became that of a considerable part of the French nation, and the Prince had solemnly treated with this party in the edict of Nantz; that edict became an inviolable contract, which could not be annulled without the joint consent of both parties: So that ever since that time, the profession of the protestant religion is, in my opinion, lawful in France.

Indeed, were it not so, the subject should surely be left at liberty to chuse the alternative of leaving the kingdom with his effects, or of remaining, on condition of his conforming to the established religion. But to compel them to stay, and yet refuse to tolerate them; to insist on their existence and annihilation at the same time; to deprive them of the common pri-

vilege of nature, to annull their marriages *, to declare their children bastards—But hold, I shall say too much, in speaking the truth here.

I may venture to observe, however, that it might be political to deprive the *French* Protestants of their chiefs : But the government should have stopped there. Political maxims have their applications and distinctions. In order to prevent dissentions, which there is no longer any just reason to fear, the government hath deprived itself of very considerable resources of which it stood in great need. What hurt can a party do, in such a kingdom as *France*, which hath neither great men nor nobility at their

* In an arret of the Parliament of Toulouse, concerning the affair of the unfortunate *Calas*, the Protestants are reproached with intermarrying with each other; *marriage being, according to the Protestants, an act merely civil, and of course, subject, both in its form and effects, to the will and pleasure of the King.* So because marriage is reckoned by the Protestants a civil act, it must follow that they are obliged to submit to the will of the King, who makes it an act of the Roman Catholick religion. Thus the Protestants, to be legally entitled to marry, are obliged to become Catholics, notwithstanding, according to them, it is an act purely civil. Such is the logic of Messrs. the Parliament of Toulouse.—The kingdom of France is so very extensive, that the French imagine the whole human race should have no other laws than theirs. Their Parliaments and tribunals appear to have no idea of the law of nature and of nations; and it is very remarkable, that in all this great kingdom, in which are so many Universities, Colleges and Academies, wherein are taught so many frivolous arts and sciences, there is not one professor of natural law among them. The French are the only people in Europe who have looked on this study as useless.

head? Examine into all your preceding wars, called religious, and you will find them to have taken their rise at court, and amidst the cabals of the great. When the intrigues of the cabinet had embroiled publick affairs, the chiefs excited the people in the name of the Lord. But what intrigues, what cabals can be formed by a parcel of tradesmen and peasants? By what means can they form a party, in a country that contains nothing but servants and masters, and in which equality of condition is either unknown or looked upon with dishonour? A tradesman proposing to raise troops might be listened to in *England*, but would set every body laughing in *France* *.

If I were a King—No—a Minister—still less; but if I were a man in power in *France*, I should say; Every one among us is ambitious of posts, employments; every one is for purchasing the power to do ill; *Paris* and the court swallow up every thing. Let us leave these poor people to fill up the void of the Provinces; but let them be tradesmen and always tradesmen, labourers and always labourers. Not being able to emerge from their situation, they will make the most of it. They will supply the place of our

* The only situation in which a people, thus destitute of chiefs, will take up arms, is that of despair, to which being reduced by their persecutors, they have no other choice than in the manner of their destruction. In which case, the world beholds with astonishment, the power which a contemptible party may deduce from their despair; a circumstance which persecutors never have calculated before-hand. And yet these wars have occasioned so much bloodshed, that they ought seriously to think of the consequence before they render them inevitable.

people

people, in those conditions of life which we all aspire to get out of ; they will make commerce and agriculture flourish, which we abandon ; they will furnish out our luxury ; they will labour, and we shall reap the fruits of it.

If this project would not be more equitable than those which are now pursued, it would at least be more humane, and undoubtedly more useful. It is less the tyranny and ambition of the great than their prejudices and confined views, which are so injurious to the common people of all nations.

I will conclude what I have to say on this subject, by transcribing a short discourse which bears some relation to it.

A Parsi of Suratte having secretly married a Turkish woman, was discovered, seized, and, having refused to embrace Mahometanism, was condemned to death. Before he went to execution, he addressed his Judge, in the following manner :

“ Will you, then, take away my life ? For what crime is it you punish me ? I have rather transgressed my own law than yours : My law speaks to the heart, and is without cruelty ; my crime hath been punished by the censure of my brethren. But what have I done to you deserving of death ? I have behaved to you as if you were of my family, and have chosen a sister from among you. I have left her to her own faith, and, for her own interest, she hath respected mine. Confining myself willingly to her alone, I have honoured her as the instrument of that worship which the author of my being requires, and have by her means paid that tribute which every man owes to his species. Love bestowed her on me, and virtue hath endeared her to me ;

she hath not lived in a state of servitude, but hath entirely possessed the heart of her husband; my fault hath made her no less happy than myself. To expiate so venial a crime, however, you would have had me turn liar and impostor; you would have compelled me to profess your sentiments, without respecting or believing them; as if the violator of our laws deserved to be subjected to yours, you have offered to my choice perjury or death, and I have chosen the latter, for I will not deceive you. I die, then, since it must be so; but I die worthy to revive and reanimate the body of another just man. I die a martyr to my religion, without fear of changing it after death for yours. May I come again to the Mahometans to teach them to become humane, merciful, and just: For serving the same God as we do, as there are not two Gods, you are blinded by your zeal to torment his servants, and are only sanguinary and cruel, because you are inconsistent.

“ You are mere children, that in your play are capable only of doing mischief to mankind. You imagine yourselves wise, and you know nothing of God. Can your new-fangled tenets be agreeable to him, who exists and hath been adored from all eternity? How can such a modern people speak of the religions established before them? Our rites are as old as the stars in the firmament: The first rays of the sun lighted up and received the homage of our forefathers. The great Zerdust beheld the infancy of the world; he foretold and described the order of the universe: And yet you, ye men of yesterday, you would set yourselves up to be our Prophets. Twenty ages before Mahomet, before the birth of Ismael or his father, the
Magi

Magi were of ancient standing. Our sacred books had given law to Asia and the world, while three great Empires had successively flourished and passed away under our ancestors, before yours had existence.

“ Such, ye prejudiced mortals, is the difference between you and us. You call yourselves believers, and you live like barbarians. Your institutions, your laws, your religion, nay, even your virtues, serve only to vex and debase human nature. The duties you prescribe are all gloomy and painful. Such are your fastings, self-denial, stripes, mutilations, and seclusion; ye know not how to lay yourselves under any obligations but such as are attended with affliction and restraint. You make men hate life, and the means of their preservation; your women are without men, your lands without cultivation; you devour the brute creation, and massacre the human; you delight in blood and cruelty, and by means of the twofold yoke of fanaticism and despotic power, impose customs that are destructive to our species and shocking to nature.

“ As to us, we are men of peace; we neither do, nor wish, ill to any thing that breathes, not even to our tyrants themselves: We give them, without reluctance, the fruits of our labour, contented to be useful to them and to discharge our own duty. Our numerous herds still cover your pastures; the trees we plant, afford you fruit and shade; your lands, which we cultivate, supply you with nourishment by our means; a simple and harmless people increase and multiply under your oppression, and draw from the bosom of our common mother that plenty and abundance which you could not have procured for yourselves. The sun, which lights us at

labour, is a witness of our patience and your injustice ; when it rises, it finds us constantly employed in well doing ; and when it sets it attends us home to our families, there to prepare ourselves for new labour.

“ The truth is known only to God. If, notwithstanding all this, therefore, we are deceived in our religion, it is hardly to be believed that we shall be condemned to Hell ; we, who are employed only in doing good upon earth ; and that you should be of the number of the elect, and chosen of God, who do nothing but ill. But, supposing we are really in an error, you ought to shew it some respect, for your own advantage. Our piety makes you fat, and yours makes you lean ; thus we repair the mischiefs which are done you by a destructive religion. Believe me, you had better let us enjoy our own opinions, which are so useful to you ; there being just reason to fear, that if we should adopt yours, it would prove the greatest evil that could happen to you.”

I have thus endeavoured, my Lord, to give you an idea of that spirit, in which the Savoyard's creed was written, and of those considerations which induced me to publish it. On which, I now take the liberty to ask you, in what respect can you call his doctrines blasphemous, impious, or abominable ? and what you find in it so scandalous and pernicious to mankind ? I ask the same of those who have charged me with publishing what I ought to have kept secret, and with the intention of disturbing the public peace and good order of society ; a vague and impertinent imputation, with which those, who reflect least on what is useful or hurtful, excite the credulous public against a well meaning

ing author. To recal people to the true faith which they have thrown aside, is this to teach them to believe nothing? To advise every one to submit to the laws of their country, is this to disturb the peace and good order of society? Do I write against all religious worship, by exhorting every people to abide by the established modes of their country? Do we deprive a man of what he has, by advising him not to change it? Is the paying a respect to every religion, making a mock of all religions? In a word, is it so essential to the professors of each, to hate one another, that, if that hate be removed, religion itself is abolished?

Yet this is what the people are told, by those who are in power, when the public odium is to be excited against the advocate for truth. So now, ye cruel persecutors, your arrests, your mandates, and your journals, exasperate and abuse the public on my account. On the credit of your clamours the world conceives me a monster of wickedness: Your clamours, however, will, sooner or later, subside, and my writings will remain to your shame. The more moderate Christians will search them, with astonishment, for those horrid sentiments you pretend to find there, and will only see the morals of their divine master mixed with lessons of peace, concord, and charity. May they learn thence to be more just than their fathers! May the virtues they gather from thence avenge me one day of your maledictions!

With regard to such objections, as relate to the particular sects into which the world is divided, would I could give them sufficient force, to make every one less opiated of his own, and less an enemy to others; to induce every

one to be indulgent and candid, from the natural and striking consideration, that if he had been born in a different country, or among a different sect, he would have infallibly taken that for error which he now takes for truth, and that for truth which he now takes for error ! It is of so much consequence to mankind to regard less the opinions, which serve to divide, than those which unite them ! On the contrary, by neglecting what they approve in common, they are embittered against each other, on account of their particular sentiments ; sticking most for those opinions which seem the most unreasonable, while every one supplies with confidence that authority which reason refuses. Thus, while we are all agreed at the bottom about every thing which is truly interesting, and of which we take little notice, we spend our lives in disputation, in quarrelling, and in persecuting each other, on account of those things we understand the least, and which it is least necessary for us to understand. Decisions after decisions are made to no purpose, and their contradictions palliated in vain by an unintelligible jargon ; we find every day new questions to resolve, and new subjects to quarrel about ; because every doctrine hath infinite branches, and because every body, full of the importance of his petty refinement, believes that to be essential which is not so, and neglects what really is so. Hence, if any one proposes objections which they cannot resolve, which, on account of the perplexity of their doctrines, becomes every day more easy to do, they are as fretful as children ; and because they are more attached to their party than to the truth, and have more pride than sincerity,

cerity, the less they are able to prove, the less are they disposed to pardon any doubt.

My own history may serve to shew, better than any other, the judgment we ought to form of our modern Christians; but as this would say more of them than is credible, it may, perhaps, one day give rise to an opinion directly opposite; that which is now the opprobrium of my contemporaries may be their glory; when the well-meaning reader of my work shall cry out in the simplicity of his heart, "What heavenly times must those have been when such a book as this was burnt as impious, and its author persecuted as a malefactor! Doubtless, the productions of that age must have breathed the most sublime devotion, the whole earth must have been covered with Saints!"

But other books will likewise remain. It will be known, for example, that the same age produced a panegyrist on the feast of St. Bartholomew, a Frenchman, and, as it may well be believed, an Ecclesiastic, without exciting either Parliament or Prelate against him. Then, indeed, by comparing the morals of the two books, and the crimes of their respective authors, the language of the world might be changed, and a different conclusion drawn.

Those are abominable doctrines which excite people to injustice, to murder, and fanaticism. For what can be more abominable than to reduce violence and injustice to a system, and to deduce them from the mercy of God? I shall abstain here from drawing a parallel that may displease you. So far, however, your Lordship will agree with me, that if France had professed the religion of the Savoyard Priest, a religion so pure and simple, inculcating the fear of God

and the love of man, your fields would not have so often been dyed with blood ; a people so gay and agreeable would not have astonished the rest of mankind with their cruelties in so many massacres and persecutions, from the time of the inquisition of Toulouse* to the feast of St. Bartholomew ; the Counsellor Du Bourg would not have been gibbeted, for having given his opinion in favour of the Protestants ; the inhabitants of Merindol and the Cabrieres had not been put to death by an arret of the Parliament of Aix ; nor in our own times the unhappy Calas been put to the torture and expired on the wheel, for a crime of which he could not be guilty. But we shall now return, my Lord, to your censures, and the reasons on which you found them. It is always men, says the Curate, who tell us the word of God, and who tell us it also in unknown tongues. On the contrary, we often stand in great need of God to ascertain the word of men ; it is, at least, certain he might have given us his own word, instead of making use of such suspected instruments. The Curate complains that so much human testimony is requisite to ascertain the divine word ;

* It is true that St. Dominic, a Spanish Saint, bore a considerable part in this Inquisition. This Saint, according to a writer of his Order, had so much charity, in preaching against the Albigenes, to unite himself to certain devout persons, who, being zealous for the faith, took care to extirpate those heretics, by the material sword, who could not be subdued by the sword of the spirit.—This kind of charity little resembles that of our good Curate, and was, indeed, differently rewarded. The professors of the one are persecuted, while those of the other are canonized,

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ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS. 325

How many men are they, says he, between God and me !

To this you reply : “ To justify this complaint, my dear brethren, we ought to be able to affirm that a revelation must be false, when it is not made to every individual ; we ought to be able to say, that God cannot require us to believe any thing he has said, unless he had particularly addressed himself to us.”

On the contrary, however, this complaint is justifiable only by admitting the truth of revelation. For if you suppose it false, what complaint have you a right to make against the means God hath made use of, when he hath confessedly made use of none ? Ought he to account to you for all the abuses of an impostor ? When you permit yourselves to be duped, it is your fault, and not his. But if God, doubtless at liberty to use his own means, hath given the preference to those which require on our part so much erudition, and such profound investigation, is the Curate to blame to wish, “ That, being always reduced to the necessity of examining, comparing, and verifying the evidence, God had deigned to have saved him all that trouble ; should he have served him with a less willing heart ?”

Your minor, my Lord, is so admirable that I shall transcribe it verbatim. I am indeed fond of making use of your own words ; this is my greatest partiality. “ But is there not an infinite number of facts even prior to that of the Christian revelation, of which it would be absurd to doubt ? Now by what means do we acquire the knowledge of these facts but by human testimony ? By what other means did our

author himself become acquainted with Sparta, with Athens, and with Rome, on whose laws, manners, and heroes he lavishes such extravagant encomiums? What a number of men between him and even the historians that transmitted to him an account of those events?"

If the subject were less serious, or had I less respect for your Lordship, this manner of reasoning would furnish me with an opportunity of diverting my readers; but God forbid that I should forget what is due to the subject I am treating, or to the persons whom I address. At the hazard, therefore, of being flat and insipid in my reply, I shall content myself with barely pointing out your error.

You will please to consider, then, that it is perfectly consistent with the order of things, that human facts should be attested by human witnesses. They cannot be confirmed by any other means; for how should I know that Sparta and Rome ever existed unless by means of contemporary authors: Now between me and authors, who lived so far distant from me, there must necessarily be intermediate communicants: But where is the necessity of any such between God and me, and wherefore at least such as lived at so great a distance of place and time, that they must stand in need of so many others? Is it simple or natural that God should have made choice of Moses to speak to John James Rousseau?

Add to this, that no one is obliged, under pain of damnation, to believe that Rome or Sparta have existed; nor is any one consigned to eternal flames for having doubted it. Every fact, of which we are not eye-witnesses, must gain credit
with

with us from the moral evidence of its truth, and all moral evidence is capable of a greater or less degree of certitude. Can I believe, therefore, that divine justice will cast me for ever into hell, merely for not determining exactly the point at which such evidence becomes irrefragable?

There is not an historical fact in the world more fully attested, than that of the Vampires. It is confirmed by regular information, certificates of Notaries, Surgeons, Vicars, and Magistrates. And yet, with all this, who believes in the Vampires? And shall we be all damned for not believing? However well attested, even in the opinion of the incredulous Cicero, are many of the prodigies related by Livy, I cannot help regarding them as so many fables, and certainly am not the only person who doth so. My constant experience, as well as that of mankind in general, is much more convincing in this respect than the testimony of individuals. If Sparta and Rome were in themselves prodigies, they were prodigies of the moral kind; so that we should be like the Laplanders, who fix the natural stature of man at four foot, if we should circumscribe the human mind within the standard of those little souls which exist in modern times.

You will please to remember, my Lord, that I go on to examine your arguments in themselves, without defending those you have contraverted. After this necessary intimation, I will take the liberty to make another supposition on your method of argumentation.

I will suppose that an inhabitant of St. James's Street, should address himself to the Archbishop of Paris, in the following manner:

“ I know,

“ I know, my Lord, that you neither believe in the beatification of St. John de Paris, nor in the miracles which it pleased God to work openly on his tomb, in the sight of the most enlightened and numerous multitude. I think it my duty, therefore, to assure you, that I myself saw that Saint in person rise up from the place where his bones were deposited.”

To this, we will suppose, he adds a detail of these particular circumstances, which would be most striking to the spectator of such a fact. I am persuaded that, on receiving this piece of information, you would begin your reply by enquiring into the situation and sentiments of the informant; concerning his confessor, and other matters of that kind; and when you had comprehended, both by his manner and discourse, that he was a poor mechanick, who could not produce his certificate of confession, you would be confirmed in the opinion of his being a Jansenist. In which case, you would doubtless answer him in a tone of raillery: “ Ay, ay, my friend, you are a convulsionary, and have seen the resurrection of the Abbé Paris? It is not at all surprising in you, who have seen so many other miracles.”

In reply to this, I go on to suppose, he persists in the truth of his relation. He will tell you, that he was not alone when he saw this miracle; that there were two or three persons with him who saw the same thing, and that others, to whom he had spoken of it, assured him also they themselves had seen the same. On this, you would ask him if all these witnesses were Jansenists too? “ Yes, my Lord, they were; but this is no matter; they are sufficient in number, of irreproachable manners, of great good sense, and

and in every respect unexceptionable; the proof is compleat, and nothing is wanting to our declaration to ascertain the veracity of the fact."

Some less charitable Bishops might send for a commissary, and consign the honest man, who had been honoured with this extraordinary vision, to the hospital for lunatics. But you, my Lord, more humane, without being more credulous, would content yourself, after giving him a serious reprimand, to dismiss him thus: "I know that two or three witnesses, of good morals and common sense, are sufficient to attest the life or death of a man; but I know not how many are requisite to confirm the resurrection of a Jansenist. Go, then, my friend, and till I know this, endeavour to rectify and compose your brain. I dispense with your fasting; and here is something to buy you a good dinner."

This, my Lord, is nearly what you would say to him, and what every other sensible man would say, in the same case. Hence I conclude, as well from your Lordship, as from every other man of sense, that the moral proofs, sufficient to ascertain the facts which are in the order of possibilities, are not sufficient to ascertain facts of a different order, or those which are supernatural: On which I leave you to judge of the justice of your comparison. And yet, the following is the exulting inference you bring forth against me: "The scepticism of our author, therefore, with regard to this particular, is evidently founded on nothing but the interests of his own infidelity."

If my infidelity, my Lord, should ever procure me a Bishoprick, worth an hundred thousand

thousand livres per annum, you might then talk of the interests of my infidelity.

I proceed to transcribe your remarks ; taking the liberty only of restoring, when necessary, those passages of my book which you have omitted.

“ What if a man (says he a little further) should come and harangue us in the following manner : *I come, ye mortals, to announce to you the will of the Most High ; acknowledge in my voice, that of him, who sent me. I command the Sun to move backwards, the Stars to change their places, the Mountains to disappear, the Waves to remain fixed on high, and the Earth to wear a different aspect.* Who would not, at the sight of such miracles, immediately attribute them to the Author of Nature ?”—“ Who would not think, my dear brethren, that a writer, who speaks in this manner, wanted only to be witness to a miracle to become a Christian ?”—You might have said still more, my Lord, as I do not even stand in need of miracles to be a Christian.

“ But hear what he says farther ; “ The most important examination, after all, remains to be made into the truth of the doctrine delivered ; for as those who say that God is pleased to work these miracles, pretend that the Devil sometimes imitates them, we are no nearer than before, tho’ such miracles should be ever so well attested. As the Magicians of Pharaoh worked the same miracles, even in the presence of Moses, as he himself performed by the express command of God ; why might not they, in his absence, pretend, on the same proofs, to the same authority ? Thus, after proving the truth of the doctrine by the miracle, you are reduced to prove
the

the truth of the miracle by the doctrine, lest the works of the Devil should be mistaken for those of God. What is to be done in this case? There is but one step to be taken, and that is to recur to reason, and leave miracles to themselves: Better indeed had it been, never to have had recourse to them †."

That is as much as to say, continues your Lordship, *shew me a miracle and I will believe.* Yes, my Lord, it as much as to say, *Shew me a miracle, and I will believe in miracles.* And again, *yet when you have shewn me a miracle, I will not believe.* Yes, my Lord, it is saying, agreeable to the precept of Moses, that though a miracle be shewn me, I will not therefore believe in any absurd or unreasonable doctrine, it may be calculated to support. I should sooner believe in the power of magick than acknowledge the voice of God in such injunctions as contradict my reason.

I have said, that the plainest arguments of common sense, might, in this particular, be obscured and perplexed by subtle distinctions: This is also one of my predictions; of which the following passage is the accomplishment.

"When a doctrine is acknowledged to be divine, and to be founded on the truth of positive revelation, we make use of it, indeed, to judge of miracles; that is, to reject the pretended prodigies which impostors may set up against such doctrine. When the point in question is an intire new doctrine, which is said to be dic-

† I have been obliged here, after his Lordship's example, to confound the text and the notes. The reader may consult both by turning to Emilius, vol. iii. page 113.

tated;

tated by the spirit of God, miracles are produced as proofs of it; that is to say, the person who assumes the character of a missionary from the Most High, confirms his mission and the doctrines he preaches by miracles, which are the testimony of God himself. Thus the doctrine and the miracles are made use of respectively, according to the different points of view, in which they are placed, in the study or illustration of religion. But in this there is no abuse of argument, ridiculous sophistry, or absurd reasoning in a circle."

Of this I leave the reader to judge. For my part, I shall not add a syllable. I have sometimes replied to your arguments by others of my own; but shall here leave you to be answered by yourself.

Where then, my good brethren, is that philosophical candour and sincerity of which this writer makes so great a boast?

In answer to this question, my Lord, I can only reply, that I never piqued myself on any philosophical sincerity, for I know of no such thing. Nay, I cannot say much in favour even of Christian sincerity, while the professed Christians of our own times take it so ill, that we do not suppress every objection they are not able to remove. But for pure candour and simple sincerity, I may boldly ask, whether yours or mine are more evident in the case before us?

The farther I advance, the more interesting is the subject between us; I must therefore continue to transcribe your Mandate: in a discussion of so much importance I should not omit even a single word.

Will it be believed, that, after having taken the greatest pains to invalidate the human testimony of the
Christian,

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Christian revelation, the same author should pay it the most solemn and positive deference imaginable?

There would, doubtless, be a reason for it; as I hold every doctrine to be revealed, in which I acknowledge the traces of the divine spirit. It is requisite only to render your expression less equivocal. If, by saying a deference to it, you mean the christian revelation, you are in the right; but if you mean to the human testimony of it, you are certainly wrong. But be this as it will, I appeal to your testimony against those who pretend that I reject all revelation; as if to confess that a doctrine is attended with difficulties insuperable for the human understanding, is to reject it; and as if the not admitting it upon human testimony were to reject it, when there are other equivalent or superior proofs, on account of which that may be well dispensed with.

To convince you of this strange inconsistency, and at the same time to serve for your edification, my dear brethren, I shall cite the passage wherein he hath done this in the plainest terms. “ I will confess to you, says he, that the majesty of the scriptures strikes me with admiration; as the purity of the Gospel * hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our Philosophers with all their pomp of diction: How mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the scripture! Is it

* The Archbishop having transcribed this passage somewhat incorrectly, in his Mandate, Mr. Rousseau rallies him for his inaccuracy. As the variation, however, is not of any importance, and depends in some measure on the idiom of the original, the translator thinks it unnecessary to particularize it.

possible

possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manners! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtilty, what truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the Philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation?

* When Plato described his imaginary good man loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ: The resemblance was so striking, that all the Fathers perceived it.

“What prepossession, what blindness must it be, to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the son of Mary? What an infinite disproportion there is between them! Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was any thing more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of

* I have thought proper, as I came along, to fill up the breaks made by the Archbishop; not only to supply those omissions which he may have made with an insidious design, but also every other, as the want of connection frequently weakens the passage, and as my enemies are very solicitous to suppress every thing I have said in favour of religion.

morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice; he had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and reduce their examples to precept. Aristides had been *just* before Socrates defined *justice*; Leonidas had given up his life for his country before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty; the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety; before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his compatriots that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example. The greatest wisdom was made known amidst the most bigotted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people on earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophising with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and cursed by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed, indeed, the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a Sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the Evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty without obviating it: It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than

that

that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel; the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero.*” *It would be difficult, my dear brethren, to express a more explicit homage to the authenticity of the Gospel.* I am obliged to you, my Lord, for this concession, as you are by so far less unjust than my other enemies. *And yet, say you, the author acknowledges it only in consequence of human testimony.* Here, my Lord, you are mistaken; I acknowledge such authenticity in consequence of the Gospel itself, and that sublimity which I find in it, abstracted from any moral evidence. I do not want any assurance that a Gospel exists, when I am myself in possession of it. *It is always men that report what other men have reported,* and nothing more; they do not report the existence of a Gospel; this I see with my own eyes; and should the whole world maintain that there is no such thing, I should be firmly convinced the whole world was mistaken. *What a number of men between God and him!* Not one. The Gospel itself determines this point, and this is in my own hands. By what means soever it came there, and by whomsoever written, I acknowledge in it the dictates of the divine spirit. This is as immediately present as possible; there are no human witnesses between this evidence and my own heart; the sense in which human testimony intervenes, regarding the history of this sacred book, its authors, the time when it was written, &c. all which points enter into those

* Emilius, vol. iii. p. 137, &c.

critical discussions in which moral evidence universally is admitted. Such is the reply of the Savoyard Curate.

Nothing can be more evident, you say, than that the writer here contradicts himself, and is confuted on his own principles. Your Lordship is welcome to enjoy my confusion.—*How strangely infatuated therefore is this author to add, “And yet, with all this, the same Gospel abounds with incredible relations, with circumstances repugnant to reason, and which it is impossible for a man of sense either to conceive or admit. What is to be done amidst all these contradictions? Be modest and circumspect: Regard in silence * what cannot be either disproved or comprehended, and humble thyself before the Supreme Being, who only knows the*

* In order that mankind should impose on themselves this respectful silence, it is requisite that somebody should give them for once the reasons for so doing. He, who is sensible of these reasons, may give them, but those who censure others without giving them, may as well be silent. To address the publick boldly and with frankness, is the right of every man, and even his duty on subjects of utility: But it is not right for one individual publicly to censure another; this is attributing to himself too great a superiority of virtue and abilities. It is for this reason I have never taken upon me to criticise or reprimand any one. I have told the age, indeed, some harsh truths; and I have not been severe on individuals; but when I have occasionally contraverted or mentioned the writings of others, I have always spoken of living authors with the utmost tenderness and circumspection. The publick is witness of the return they have made me. Indeed, all those Gentlemen, who are so very forward and ambitious to teach me humility, appear to find this advice much easier to give than to take.

truth. Such is the involuntary scepticism in which I remain." *But can this scepticism, my dear brethren, be indeed involuntary, when he refuses to admit the doctrines of a book, which, by his own confession, cannot be the work of man? when this book bears the marks of truth, so striking, so great, and so inimitable, that the inventor would be more astonishing than the hero of it? Surely we may here safely say, that iniquity hath belied itself.*

You charge me with iniquity, my Lord, without a reason; and often impute to me falsehood, of which you give no example. You will please to observe, I take a contrary method with you.

The scepticism of the Curate is involuntary, for the very reason you give that it is not so. He would have rejected the Gospel, indeed, for the reasons before given, if supported only by those feeble authorities you would give it, and if that divine spirit which breathes in its morals and doctrines did not give it all that authority which human testimony must ever want in a matter of this kind.

He admits, therefore, of this sacred book with all the admirable things it contains, and which the human understanding may comprehend: But *as to those incredible things which are repugnant to reason, and which it is impossible for a man of sense either to conceive or admit*, he regards them in silence without comprehending or rejecting them, and humbles himself before that Great Being, who only knows the truth. Such is his scepticism; and this scepticism must needs be involuntary, since it is founded on irrefragable proofs both on one side and the other, which force the understanding to remain in suspense. This scepticism is that of every rational and sincere Christian, who is desirous of knowing the

the things of Heaven only so far as he can comprehend them, of knowing those only which are of importance to his moral practice; rejecting, with the Apostle, all foolish and uninformative questions, which serve to engender strife.

You suppose me to reject revelation, in order to adopt natural religion; now I have not, in the first place, rejected revelation. After this, *you accuse me of not even admitting natural religion, or at least of not acknowledging the necessity of it.* And your only proof of it is in the following passage, which you quote for that purpose. "If I am mistaken, it is without design. This is sufficient to prevent my errors from being imputed to me as a crime. And tho' you should be mistaken in the same manner, it is of very little consequence." That is to say, continues your Lordship, "It is sufficient, according to this writer, to be persuaded you are in possession of the truth, in order that such persuasion, though attended with the most monstrous errors, should not be a subject of reproach; and that every man, who professes himself to be sincere and ingenuous, should be accounted religious and wise, though adopting even the horrid doctrines of Atheism. Is not this throwing open the door to introduce all the modes of superstition, fanatical systems, and chimerical notions of the human mind?"

For your part, my Lord, I am persuaded, you cannot here say, with the Curate, *If I am mistaken, it is without design.* For it is very evident that it is with design, you are pleased to give into a mistake yourself, and then impose it on your readers. This, my Lord, I engage unanswerably to prove: And make this previous

declaration, that you may be more attentive to what I say.

The profession of faith by the Savoyard Curate is composed of two parts. The first, which is the longest, of the greatest importance, and abounds most with new and striking truths, is intended to contravert the doctrines of modern materialism, and to confirm the existence of God and the principles of natural religion, with all the force the author's abilities would admit of. Neither your Lordship, nor the Priests, have taken any notice of this part, the subject of it being indifferent to you; for, in fact, the cause of God affects you but little, provided the interests of the Clergy are secure.

The second part, much shorter, more irregular, and more superficial, contains certain doubts and difficulties relative to revelations in general; ascribing, however, to ours that real certitude which is evident in the purity and sanctity of its doctrines, and in that sublimity, altogether divine, which distinguished its great author. The design of this second part, is to make every one more moderate and reserved in the profession of his own religion, and in taxing others of different persuasions with insincerity; by shewing that the proofs of the best were not so demonstrative as to authorise them to treat those as criminals who did not see so clearly as themselves. This second part, written modestly and with all possible respect, is that only which hath attracted the attention of your Lordship, and of the Magistrates. But you have nothing but persecution and abuse to offer in refutation of my arguments. You have weighed the evil consequences of doubting what is really doubtful;

ful ; but you have not considered the good consequences of proving what is really true.

In fact, the first part, which contains every thing which is really essential to religion, is absolute and decisive. The author here neither deliberates nor doubts. Both his conscience and reason are fully determined ; he believes, he affirms, and is most strongly persuaded of the truth of what is laid down.

As to the second part, he begins it, on the contrary, with declaring, that “ the examination he is going to make is very different from the former ; presenting to his view nothing but perplexity, mysteriousness and obscurity ;” that no farther authority should be placed on his discourse than that of reason ; that he was ignorant himself whether he was right or wrong, and that all his affirmations are only so many rational doubts.

He proposes, therefore, his objections, and difficulties. At the same time, also, he proposes the reasons and grounds of his belief : So that from the whole discussion there results a certitude in all the essential points of religion, and a respectful scepticism concerning the rest. Towards the end of the second part, he insists again on the circumspection with which he ought to be heard.

“ If I were more positive in myself, I should have assumed a more decisive and dictatorial air ; but I am a man ignorant and subject to error. What can I do more ? I have opened to you my heart without reserve : What I have thought certain I have given you as such ; my doubts I have declared as doubts, my opinions as opinions ; and have given you my reasons for both. It remains now for you to judge.”

When the author of that paper, therefore, says, "If I am mistaken, it is without design; which is sufficient to prevent my errors from being imputed to me as a crime;" I will ask every reader of common-sense, and the least sincerity, whether it be on the first or second part that the suspicion must fall of his being in an error? Whether it must fall on that which he positively affirms to be true, or on that which he hesitates upon? Whether this suspicion relates to his falsely believing in a God, or his being in the wrong as to his doubts concerning revelation? You, my Lord, have declared the first; against all reason, and with the sole view of making me appear criminal; I may defy your Lordship to assign any other motive. Where then is, I will not say justice, or Christian charity, but your sense, and your humanity?

But, supposing you could have been mistaken as to the object of the Curate's suspicion in this case, the very passage you quote would have undeceived you, in spite of yourself. For, when he says, *This is sufficient to prevent my error from being imputed to me as a crime*, he acknowledges that such an error might be a crime, and might be imputed to him, if he were not sincere: But on the supposition that there is no God, where is the crime of believing there is one? And supposing it be a crime, who is to impute it to us? The fear, therefore, of being in an error, cannot relate to what is said of natural religion; the discourse of the Curate being, in fact, a very strange heap of absurdities indeed, in the sense you have ascribed to it. It is then impossible to infer, from the passage you quote, either that *I do not admit of natural religion*, or that *I*

do not acknowledge its necessity. It is still much less possible to infer from thence, *that every man who professes himself sincere and ingenuous should be accounted religious and wise, tho' adopting the horrid doctrines of Atheism.* I will add also, that it was equally impossible for you to think the inference, you thus drew, a just one. If this be not demonstrated, nothing can possibly be so, or I must be totally void of common understanding.

To shew that no divine mission can authorise a man to propagate absurdities, the Curate conceives a dispute to arise between a pretender to inspiration, whom you are pleased to style a Christian, and a rationalist, whom you are pleased to call an unbeliever; these he supposes to talk in their own language, which he disproves, and which is assuredly neither his nor mine. On this head, you charge me with notorious partiality and insincerity, and you prove it by the foolishness of the discourse of the first of these characters. But if what he says be so very foolish, why do you honour him with the name of Christian? And if the Rationalist refutes only futile assertions, what right have you to tax him with infidelity? Doth it follow, from the absurdities advanced by a pretender to inspiration, that he must be a Catholick, or from those which a Rationalist refutes that the latter must be an Infidel?

“ *If reason and revelation contradict each other, you say, it is certain that God would contradict himself.*” This is a very great concession, my Lord; for it is very certain that God cannot contradict himself. Again, “ *You tell us, ye impious Infidels, that the tenets which we look upon to be revealed, contradict eternal truths: But it is not sufficient for you merely to assert this.*” Certainly

it is not ; let us endeavour, therefore, to do something more.

I dare say, you already foresee the point I aim at. Indeed, it is plain, you passed over this mysterious article as if you had walked on burning coals, on which you were afraid to trust your feet. You oblige me, however, to stop you for a moment, even in this painful situation. I shall be prudent enough, however, to detain you as little as possible.

You will agree with me, I imagine, that one of those eternal truths, which serve as the first principles of ratiocination, is, that *a part is less than the whole* ; and it is for having affirmed the contrary that the Dogmatist appears to you to talk foolishly and absurdly. Now, according to your doctrine of transubstantiation, when Jesus held his last supper with his disciples, and having broken bread, gave unto each of them his body, it is clear that he must hold his whole body in his hand ; and if he eat of the consecrated bread himself, as he probably might, he must put his head into his mouth. Here then is a clear and sufficient proof that a part is greater than the whole, and that the thing containing is less than the thing contained. What say you to this, my Lord ? For my part, I know nobody but the Chevalier de Causans *, who can get you out of this difficulty.

I am not insensible, indeed, that you have the resource of St. Augustin ; but that amounts to the same thing ; this good father, after having piled up a heap of unintelligible arguments about the Trinity, very ingenuously confessing

* A Gentleman, who undertakes to demonstrate various impossibilities.

they had no meaning : But, adds he, very frankly, *We express ourselves in this manner, not with the view of saying any thing, but only that we may not be totally silent* †.

Every thing considered, my Lord, I think the best method you can take with regard to this article, as well as many others, is that which you have already taken with M. de Montazet, and for the very same reason.

“ *The insincerity of the author of Emilius is not less reprehensible in the language of his pretended Catholic.*” We Catholics, says he, make a great noise about the authority of the Church : But what do we gain by it, if it requires as many proofs to establish this authority as other sects require immediately to establish their doctrines ? The church determines, that the church hath a right to determine : Is not this a special proof of its authority ? “ Who would not think, my dear brethren, from the pretences of this impostor, that the authority of the church is to be proved only by its own decisions, and that it proceeds arbitrarily thus ; I determine that I am infallible, therefore I am infallible. A scandalous imputation ! My dear brethren.”—This, my Lord, is your assertion ; now let us examine your proofs. In the meantime, will you venture to affirm, that the Catholic Divines have never established the authority of the church, on that very authority itself, *ut in se virtualiter reflexam* ? If they really have done it, I lay on them no scandalous or calumnious imputation.

The constitution of Christianity, the spirit of the Gospel, and even the errors and weakness of the

† Dictum est tamen tres personæ, non ut aliquid diceretur, sed ne taceretur. *Aug. de Trinit. l. v. c. 9.*
human

human understanding, all serve to demonstrate, that the church, established by Jesus Christ, is an infallible church. All this, my Lord, is vague and indeterminate; these things, which you say serve to demonstrate, in fact demonstrate nothing. Let us proceed, therefore, directly to the substance of your demonstration. "*We are assured that, as the divine legislator always instructed mankind in the ways of truth, the church of Christ will ever do the same.*" But who are you that give us this as a sole and unanswerable proof? Are not you the church, or its heads? By the manner in which you argue, you seem to make yourselves very sure of the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Yet what is it you have said, and what says the impostor? You will examine this point yourselves; as I really have not the courage to do it.

I ought, however, to remark, that the force of the objection which you have thus attacked, lay in the words which you took care to suppress, toward the end of the passage here pointed at. *And yet, depart from this, and we enter into endless discussions* *. The Curate's argument, in plain terms, is this: To make choice of one religion out of several, says he, one of these two methods is requisite; either to hear the proofs of every different sect, and then compare them together; or to rely altogether on the authority of those who instruct us in such tenets. Now the first method requires such a degree of knowledge as few persons are in a state of acquiring, and the second would justify every one in professing the religion of the country where he was born. As an instance of this, he brings that

* Emilius, vol. iii. page 127.

of the Roman Catholics ; in which the authority of the church is held sacred, and on that he establishes his second dilemma. Either the church arrogates to itself this authority, and says, *I determine that I am infallible, therefore I am so* ; by which means it falls into the sophistical error of reasoning in a circle ; or else it must prove that it received this authority from God ; in which case, there is as great a multiplicity of proofs required to shew that the Romish church hath received this authority, as other sects require to establish directly the truth of their doctrine. No advantage, therefore, is gained in the way of instruction, nor are the people more capacitated to examine into the proofs of the authority of the church among the Catholics, than into those of the doctrine among the Protestants. How then are they to determine in any reasonable manner, otherwise than by the authority of their instructors ? But, granting this, the Turk will determine in the same manner ; and how will he in that be more to blame than you ? This, my Lord, is the argument, to which you have made no reply ; and which I conceive, indeed, to be unanswerable*. But your Episcopal liberality hath extricated you from

* This is one of those terrible objections, which my opponents are very cautious of meddling with. Nothing is more easy than to reply by abuse and pious declamations. It is not very difficult to shift off what is embarrassing. Hence it must be confessed that the Divines have, in their controversies, many advantages, which they want, in disputing with the ignorant, and with whom they must make up the defect as well as they can. They can reciprocally amuse.

from the difficulty, by disingenuously mangling the passage of the author.

Thank Heaven I have now finished this very painful task ; in which I have pursued your arguments, quotations, and censures, step by step; having shewn, that as often as you have attacked my book, you have been in the wrong. There remains only the single article of government ; I am very ready however to forgive every thing that may be said on this head ; being very certain that when the man who groans under the miseries of a people, and himself experiences them, is accused by you of poisoning the sources of public felicity, every reader must be sensible of the weight of your arguments. If my Treatise on the social compact did not exist, and it were necessary to prove a-new the important truths which are there displayed, the compliments you pay to governments at my expence, would be one of the facts I should bring in proof of them ; and the fate of the author, would be still a more striking one. There remains nothing more for me to say on this head ; my own example hath said every thing, and the passion of private interest ought not to obscure useful truths. The decree that hath been issued against my person ; the burning of my book by the common hang-

amuse each other, by suppositions, which cannot be objected to by those who have themselves nothing better to offer. Of this nature is the expedient of I know not what kind of faith, which, in order to get rid of the difficulty, they oblige the Deity to transmit from father to son. This jargon, however, they reserve for their disputations with their own profession: Should they make use of them in their disputes with us profane cavillers, they would justly be afraid of being turned into ridicule.

man;

man; these are the authentic pieces which I shall transmit to posterity in my justification; my sentiments are not less confirmed by my writings than by my misfortunes.

Thus, my Lord, have I discussed every thing you have alleged against my book. I have not passed over one of your propositions without examination; but have shewn you to be wrong in every particular, and am not in the least afraid any exception will be taken against my proofs: they must appear, indeed, unanswerable, to all persons of common-sense.

But supposing, after all, that I had been in some places mistaken, nay, if I had been mistaken throughout, surely a book might meet some indulgence, in which so sincere a love for virtue, and a real regard for truth, are manifested even in the midst of error, or the evil that may be found there! Surely some indulgence is due to an author so little dogmatical and positive, that he often cautions his readers against trusting to his notions, advises them to weigh his arguments, and to give them no authority but that of reason! A book that breathes nothing but peace, candour, patience, the love of harmony, and obedience to the laws in every thing, even in affairs of religion! A book, in short, wherein the cause of God is so boldly defended, the utility of religion so firmly established, good manners so much inculcated and respected; in which vice is disarmed of the weapons of ridicule, wickedness is described so void of sense, and virtue so truly amiable! Were there not even one word of truth in the work, the reveries it contains ought, indeed, to have been commended and encouraged, as the
most

most pleasing and delightful chimeras that could be invented to sooth a heart of sensibility and virtue. Yes, I will be bold to say, that a government truly enlightened, a government whose views are truly salutary and useful, if such a one existed in Europe, would have done public honour, would have erected a statue, to the Author of *Emilius*. I know mankind too well, indeed, to expect so much gratitude from them; but I did not know enough of them to expect what hath really happened.

After having proved that you are unreasonable in your censures, it remains for me to prove that you have calumniated me by your abuses. But, as you abuse me only in consequence of the errors you impute to my book, when I shew that those pretended errors are yours, not mine, do I not in fact shew that the consequent abuses belong to yourself, not to me? You load my work with the most odious epithets, and call me an abominable, rash, and impious impostor. What strange language doth christian charity dictate to the ministers of Jesus Christ!

But, pray, my Lord, what do you, who reproach me with blasphemy, when you make the Apostles your accomplices in that calumny which you are pleased to load me with? To hear you talk, one would imagine that St. Paul had done me the honour to think very particularly of me, and to predict my coming as that of Antichrist. And in what manner, pray, hath he predicted it? You tell us in the beginning of your mandate.

“St. Paul, my dear brethren, hath foretold that perilous times should come, in which men should be lovers of themselves, proud, blasphemers,

mers, unholy, false accusers, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than God, men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith."

I will not contend that this prediction of St. Paul is not fully accomplished; but if he had foretold, on the contrary, that there would ever be a time when such people were not to be found, I must confess I should have been more struck with the prediction, and still much more so at its accomplishment.

After this prophecy, so remarkably well applied, you have the goodness to draw my portrait, in which your Episcopal gravity condescends to amuse itself with antitheses, and I find myself a very droll personage indeed. This part, my Lord, appears to me the best of your whole Mandate. It is certainly not very easy to write a more agreeable satire, or to defame a man with more wit and spirit. *A writer hath here started up [not very high] who, educated in the midst of error, [it is very true, I was brought up in the Romish religion,] is full of the language of Philosophy [it is somewhat strange I should speak a language I do not understand] tho' no true Philosopher.* [Oh! granted; I shall never be ambitious of that title, to which I acknowledge I have no just pretensions; nor do I renounce it, I assure you, out of modesty.] *Possessed of a multiplicity of knowledge [I have learned to be ignorant indeed, of a multiplicity of things which I imagined I knew] which nevertheless hath not served to enlighten his understanding, [it hath taught me not to think it enlightened,] tho' he hath made use of it to darken the understanding of others.* [The darkness of ignorance is much better than the false light of error.] *He is given up to paradoxes both in opinion and practice,*

tice ; [certainly he is a great loser by not thinking and acting like the rest of the world !] *uniting simplicity of manners with ostentation of doctrine*, [Simplicity of manners elevates the soul—as to ostentation of doctrine, I know not what is meant by it.] *A zeal for ancient maxims, with a passion for establishing the most singular novelties* ; [there is nothing more new to us than ancient maxims ;] *the obscurity of retirement with the desire of being known to the whole world*. [Here, my Lord, you perfectly resemble our Romance-writers, who know every thing their heroes said, or thought, even in their closets. If it were the desire of being known that made me take up the pen, how comes it that this desire influenced me so late, or that I delayed so long to gratify it ?] *We have seen his invectives against those very sciences which he himself cultivated*. [This proves, that I do not imitate the generality of men of letters, and that in my writings I prefer the interests of truth to my own.] *We hear him acknowledge the excellence of the Gospel*, [always, and with the greatest sincerity] *while he is endeavouring to depreciate its tenets*. [Not so ; I would promote the charity it inculcates, which is almost suppressed by the Priests.] *We see him describing the beauty of virtue, at the same time that he is striving to extinguish the love of it, in the hearts of his readers*. [Is this true, ye honest and well meaning readers, have I extinguished in your hearts the love of virtue ?]

He hath assumed the preceptorship of human kind, in order to deceive them ; he hath erected himself into a public monitor, to lead the world astray ; and hath played the oracle of the age, in order to compleat its destruction. [I have already examined your proofs of this.] *In a treatise on the Inequality of*
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mankind,

*mankind, he hath reduced man to a level with the brutes ; [I will appeal to the reader, whether a man be debased most, by being accounted merely stupid or naturally wicked ?] In another production still more recent, he hath insinuated all the poison of inordinate pleasure under pretence of prohibiting it. [Oh ! that I could but, indeed, substitute the real charms of pleasure instead of the false ones of debauchery ! But be assured, my Lord, the clergy of your diocese are proof against *Eloisa* ; they have got a preservative in *Aloisia* *.] In the present he takes advantage of the earliest moments of life, to establish in the mind of man the maxims of irreligion and infidelity. [This imputation hath been already examined and refuted.]*

Such, my Lord, and even yet more cruel, is the manner in which you treat me ; with whom you are not acquainted, and of whom you know nothing but by hear-say. Is this behaviour dictated by that evangelical morality of which you pretend to be the defender ? We will suppose you desirous of preserving your flock from the contagious principles contained in my book ; but why should you, on this account, break out into personal abuse of the author ? I know not what end you promise yourself by such unchristian-like conduct ; but I know that, to defend one's religion by such means, is the way to render it very suspicious, among all honest, well meaning people.

And yet it is you who call me rash and presumptuous ! Can I have deserved that appellation merely for proposing my doubts, and even that

* An infamous, obscene book, well known in France.

with the greatest modesty, without attacking or naming any one? In particular, my Lord, it ill becomes you to treat, in this manner, one whom you speak of with so little justice and decorum, and whom you so wantonly and so indecently abuse.

You treat me as impious; but of what impiety can you accuse me, who never speak of a Supreme Being but to render him the honours which are his due, nor of my neighbour but to excite every one to love theirs? The impious are those who unworthily profane the cause of God, in making him act subservient to the passions of men. The impious are those, who, setting themselves up for Interpreters of the divine will, the arbiters between God and man, exact to themselves those honours, which should be paid only to the Deity. The impious are those who assume the right of exercising the power of God upon earth, and would open and shut the gates of Heaven at pleasure. The impious are those who order libels to be read in their churches—At this horrible idea my blood is all inflamed, and tears of indignation start from mine eyes. Ye Priests of the God of Peace, doubt not but ye will one day be called on to give an account of the use you have made of his temples!

You treat me as an impostor; and why? I am in your opinion in an error; but where is my imposture? Is to reason and to be mistaken, an imposition? Even a Sophist, who deceives others, without deceiving himself, is not an impostor, while he confines himself to the authority of reason, tho' he abuses it. An impostor desires to be credited on his own word; he would even have it taken implicitly. An impostor is a knave
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who imposes on others for his own interest ; but pray, my Lord, what interest could I propose to myself in this business? Impostors, according to Ulpian, are those who play delusive tricks, and use imprecations and exorcisms : Now, my Lord, I have never done any thing of this kind.

You men of place and dignity can talk away at your ease. Acknowledging no other prerogative than your own, no other laws than such as yourselves impose, you are so far from thinking yourselves under a necessity to be just, that you do not think yourselves obliged to observe the common rules of humanity. You proudly oppress the feeble, without being called to account by any one for your injustice ; and whenever your own interest or the policy of state requires it, you sweep us before you like the dust. Some pronounce sentence or burn, others dishonour and abuse, without right, without reason, without disdain, and even without anger ; but merely because they are on their route of business, and the unhappy wretch falls in their way. While you insult us with impunity, it is not even permitted us to complain ; but if we attempt to demonstrate our innocence and your injustice, we are still farther accused of wanting respect for you.

You, my Lord, have openly insulted me : I have proved that you have falsely aspersed my reputation. Were you a private man, as I am, that I might cite you to appear before an equitable tribunal, there to have a fair hearing, I, on the behalf of my book, and you with your Mandate, you would certainly be cast, and sentenced to make me a reparation as public as hath been the offence. But you, my Lord,

Lord, are in so high a station, that you can easily dispense with being just: And I am nothing. As you profess the Gospel, however, as you are a Prelate, whose business it is to teach others their duty, you certainly know your own, in such a case. For my part, I have done mine, and have nothing farther to say.

I am, my LORD,

A. Motiers,
Nov. 18, 1762.

With profound respect, &c.

J. J. ROUSSEAU.

END OF VOLUME III.

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